

**ABOLITION**  
OF THE  
**AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE,**

BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

---

ABRIDGED FROM CLARKSON.

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TOGETHER WITH  
A BRIEF VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE  
SLAVE-TRADE AND OF SLAVERY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. II.

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*AUGUSTA:*  
PUBLISHED BY P. A. BRINSMADE,  
At the Depository of Kennebec Co. S. S. Union.  
1830.

DISTRICT OF MAINE—TO WIT

*District Clerk's Office.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the fifteenth day of March, A. D. 1830, and in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Mr. P. A. BRINSMADE [L. S.] of said District, has deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, *to wit* :

“Abolition of the African Slave-trade, by the British Parliament. Abridged from Clarkson. Together with a brief view of the present state of the Slave-trade and of Slavery. In two volumes. Augusta: Published by P. A. Brinsmade, at the Depository of Kennebec Co. S. S. Union. 1830.”

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J. MUSSEY, *Clerk of the District of Maine.*

A true copy as of record, { ATTEST, J. MUSSEY,  
Clerk D. C. Maine.

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[NOTE.--In preparing the Appendix, considerable assistance has been received from the London Christian Observer, a work, which has often and eloquently, by array of arguments and facts, pleaded the cause of the oppressed.]

# HISTORY

OF THE

## ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.



### CHAPTER I.

*Continuation from June 1788 to July 1789—*

*Author travels to collect further evidence—great difficulties in obtaining it—forms committees on his tour—Privy council resume the examinations—inspect cabinet of African productions—obliged to leave many of the witnesses in behalf of the abolition unexamined—prepare their report—Labours of the committee in the interim—Proceedings of the planters and others—Report laid on the table of the House of Commons—Introduction of the question, and debate there—twelve propositions deduced from the report and reserved for future discussion—day of discussion arrives—opponents refuse to argue from the report—require new evidence—this granted and introduced—further consideration of the subject deferred to the next session—Death and character of Ramsay.*

MATTERS had now become serious. The gauntlet had been thrown down and accepted. The combatants had taken their stations, and the contest was to be renewed, which was to be decided soon on the great theatre of the nation. The committee by the very act of their institut

tion had pronounced the Slave-trade to be criminal. They, on the other hand, who were concerned in it, had denied the charge. It became the one to prove, and the other to refute it, or to fall in the ensuing session.

The committee, in this perilous situation, were anxious to find out such other persons, as might become proper evidences before the privy council. They had hitherto sent there only nine or ten, and they had then only another, whom they could count upon for this purpose, in their view. The proposal of sending persons to Africa, and the West-Indies, who might come back and report what they had witnessed, had been already negatived. The question then was, what they were to do. Upon this they deliberated, and the result was an application to me to undertake a journey to different parts of the kingdom for this purpose.

When this determination was made I was at Teston, writing a long letter to the privy council on the ill usage and mortality of the seamen employed in the Slave-trade, which it had been previously agreed should be received as evidence there. I thought it proper, however, before I took my departure, to form a system of questions upon the general subject. These I divided into six tables. The first related to the productions of Africa, and the disposition and manners of the natives. The second, to the methods of reducing them to slavery. The third, to the manner of bringing them to the ships, their value, the medium of exchange, and other circumstances. The fourth, to their transportation. The fifth, to their treatment in the colonies. The sixth, to the seamen employed in the trade.

These tables contained together one hundred and forty-five questions. My idea was, that they should be printed on a small sheet of paper, which should be folded up in seven or eight leaves, of the length and breadth of a small almanac, and then be sent in franks to our different correspondents. These, when they had them, might examine persons capable of giving evidence, who might live in their neighbourhoods or fall in their way, and return us their examinations by letter.

The committee having approved and printed the tables of questions, I began my tour.

Of this tour I shall not give the reader any very particular account. I shall mention only those things which are most worthy of his notice in it. At Poole, in Dorsetshire, I laid the foundation of a committee, to act in harmony with that of London for the promotion of the cause.

As Poole was a great place for carrying on the trade to Newfoundland, I determined to examine the assertion of the earl of Sandwich in the house of lords, when he said, in the debate on Sir William Dolben's bill, that the Slave-trade was not more fatal to seamen than the Newfoundland and some others. This assertion I knew at the time to be erroneous, as far as my own researches had been concerned: for out of twenty-four vessels, which had sailed out of the port of Bristol in that employ, only two sailors were upon the dead list. In sixty vessels from Poole, I found but four lost. At Dartmouth, where I went afterwards on purpose, I found almost a similar result. On conversing, however, with governour Holdsworth, I learned that the year 1786 had been more fatal than any other in this

trade. I learned that in consequence of extraordinary storms and hurricanes, no less than five sailors had died and twenty-one had been drowned in eighty-three vessels from that port. Upon this statement I determined to look into the muster-rolls of the trade there for two or three years together. I began by accident with the year 1769, and I went on to the end of 1772. About eighty vessels on an average had sailed thence in each of these years. Taking the loss in these years, and compounding it with that in the fatal year, three sailors had been lost, but taking it in these four years by themselves, only two had been lost, in twenty-four vessels so employed. On a comparison with the Slave-trade, the result would be, that two vessels to Africa would destroy more seamen than eighty-three sailing to Newfoundland. There was this difference also to be noted, that the loss in the one trade was generally by the weather or by accident, but in the other by cruel treatment or disease; and that they, who went out in a declining state of health in the one, came home generally recovered, whereas they, who went out robust in the other, came home in a shattered condition.

At Plymouth I laid the foundation of another committee.

With respect to evidence, which was the great object of this tour, I found myself often very unpleasantly situated in collecting it. I heard of many persons capable of giving it to our advantage, to whom I could get no introduction. I had to go after these many miles out of my established route. Not knowing me, they received me coldly, and even suspiciously; while I fell in with others, who, considering them-

selves, on account of their concerns and connexions, as our opponents, treated me in an uncivil manner.

But the difficulties and disappointments in other respects, which I experienced in this tour, even where I had an introduction, and where the parties were not interested in the continuance of the Slave-trade, were greater than people in general would have imagined. One would have thought, considering the great enthusiasm of the nation on this important subject, that they, who could have given satisfactory information upon it, would have rejoiced to do it. But I found it otherwise, and this frequently to my sorrow. There was an aversion in persons to appear before such a tribunal as they conceived the privy council to be. With men of shy or timid character this operated as an insuperable barrier in their way. But it operated more or less upon all. It was surprising to see what little circumstances affected many. When I took out my pen and ink to put down the information, which a person was giving me, he became evidently embarrassed and frightened. He began to excuse himself from staying, by alleging that he had nothing more to communicate, and he took himself away as quickly as he could with decency. The sight of the pen and ink had lost me so many good evidences, that I was obliged wholly to abandon the use of them, and to betake myself to other means. I was obliged for the future to commit my tables of questions to memory, and endeavour by practice to put down, after the examination of a person, such answers as he had given me to each of them.

Others went off because it happened that im-

mediately on my interview, I acquainted them with the nature of my errand, and solicited their attendance in London. Conceiving that I had no right to ask them such a favour, or terrified at the abruptness and apparent awfulness of my request, some of them gave me an immediate denial, which they would never afterwards retract. I began to perceive in time that it was only by the most delicate management that I could get forward on these occasions. I resolved therefore for the future, except in particular cases, that, when I should be introduced to persons who had a competent knowledge of this trade, I would talk with them upon it as upon any ordinary subject, and then leave them without saying any thing about their becoming evidences. I would take care, however, to commit all their conversation to writing, when it was over, and I would then try to find out that person among their relations or friends, who could apply to them for this purpose with the least hazard of a refusal.

There were others also, who, though they were not so much impressed by the considerations mentioned, yet objected to give their public testimony. Those, whose livelihood, or promotion, or expectations, were dependent upon the government of the country, were generally backward upon these occasions. Though they thought they discovered in the parliamentary conduct of Mr. Pitt, a bias in favour of the cause, they knew to a certainty that the lord chancellor Thurlow was against it. They conceived, therefore, that the administration was at least divided upon the question, and they were fearful of being called upon lest they should give



offence, and thus injure their prospects in life. This objection was very prevalent in that part of the kingdom which I had selected for my tour.

The reader can hardly conceive how my mind was agitated and distressed on these different accounts. To have travelled more than two months, to have seen many who could have materially served our cause, and to have lost most of them, was very trying. And though it is true that I applied a remedy, I was not driven to the adoption of it till I had performed more than half my tour. Suffice it to say, that after having travelled upwards of sixteen hundred miles backwards and forwards, and having conversed with forty-seven persons, who were capable of promoting the cause by their evidence, I could only prevail upon nine, by all the interest I could make, to be examined.

On my return to London, whither I had been called up by the committee to take upon me the superintendence of the evidence, which the privy council was now ready again to hear, I found my brother : he was then a young officer in the navy ; and as I knew he felt as warmly as I did in this great cause, I prevailed upon him to go to Havre de Grace, the great slave-port in France, where he might make his observations for two or three months, and then report what he had seen and heard ; so that we might have some one to counteract any false statement of things which might be made relative to the subject in that quarter.

At length the examinations, were resumed, and with them the contest, in which our own reputation and the fate of our cause were involved. The committee for the abolition had dis-

covered one or two willing evidences during my absence, and Mr. Wilberforce, who was now recovered from his severe indisposition, had found one or two others. These added to my own, made a respectable body: but we had sent no more than four or five of these to the council when the king's illness unfortunately stopped our career. For nearly five weeks between the middle of November and January the examinations were interrupted or put off, so that at the latter period we began to fear that there would be scarcely time to hear the rest; for not only the privy council report was to be printed, but the contest itself was to be decided by the evidence contained in it, in the existing session.

The examinations, however, went on, but they went on only slowly, being still subject to interruption from the same unfortunate cause. Among others I offered my mite of information again. I wished the council to see more of my African productions and manufactures, that they might really know what Africa was capable of affording instead of the Slave-trade, and that they might make a proper estimate of the genius and talents of the natives. The samples which I had collected, had been obtained by great labour, and at no inconsiderable expense: for whenever I had notice that a vessel had arrived immediately from that continent, I never hesitated to go, unless under the most pressing engagements elsewhere, even as far as Bristol, if I could pick up but a single new article. The lords having consented, I selected several things for their inspection out of my box, of the contents of which the following account may not be unacceptable to the reader.

The first division of the box consisted of woods of about four inches square, all polished. Among these were mahogany of five different sorts, tulip-wood, satin-wood, camwood, bar-wood, fustic, black and yellow ebony, palm tree, mangrove, calabash, and date.

The second division included ivory and musk ; four species of pepper, the long, the black, the Cayenne, and the Malaguetta : three species of gum ; namely, Senegal, Copal, and ruber astringens ; cinnamon, rice, tobacco, indigo, white and Nankin cotton, Guinea corn, and millet ; three species of beans, of which two were used for food, and the other for dyeing orange ; two species of tamarinds, one for food, and the other to give whiteness to the teeth ; pulse, seeds, and fruits of various kinds, some of the latter of which Dr. Spaarman had pronounced, from a trial during his residence in Africa, to be peculiarly valuable as drugs.

The third division contained an African loom, and an African spindle with spun cotton round it ; cloths of cotton of various kinds, made by the natives, some white, but others dyed by them of different colours, and others, in which they had interwoven European silk ; cloths and bags made of grass, and fancifully coloured ; ornaments made of the same materials ; ropes made from a species of aloes, and others, remarkably strong, from grass and straw ; fine string made from the fibres of the roots of trees ; soap of two kinds, one of which was formed from an earthy substance ; pipe-bowls made of clay, and of a brown red ; one of these, which came from the village of Dakard, was beautifully ornamented by black devices burnt in, and was besides high-

ly glazed ; another, brought from Galam, was made of earth, which was richly impregnated with little particles of gold ; trinkets made by the natives from their own gold ; knives and daggers made by them from our bar iron ; and various other articles, such as bags, sandals, dagger cases, quivers, grisgris, all made of leather of their own manufacture, and dyed of various colours, and ingeniously sewed together.

The fourth division consisted of the thumb-screw, speculum oris, and chains and shackles of different kinds, collected at Liverpool. To these were added, iron neck-collars, and other instruments of punishment and confinement, used in the West-Indies, and collected at other places. The instrument, also, by which Charles Horseler was mentioned to have been killed, in the former volume, was to be seen among these.

We were now advanced far into February, when we were alarmed by the intelligence that the lords of the council were going to prepare their report. At this time we had sent but few persons to them to examine, in comparison with our opponents, and we had yet eighteen to introduce : for answers had come into my tables of questions from several places, and persons had been pointed out to us by our correspondents, who had increased our list of evidences to this number. I wrote therefore to them, at the desire of the committee for the abolition, and gave them the names of the eighteen, and requested that all of them might be examined. In reply to my first request they informed me, that it was impossible, in the advanced state of the session, (it being then the middle of March,) that the examinations of so many could be taken ; but I

was at liberty, in conjunction with the bishop of London, to select eight for this purpose. This occasioned me to address them again; and I then found, to my surprise and sorrow, that even this last number was to be diminished to three.

This answer, considering the difficulties we had found in collecting a body of evidence, and the critical situation in which we then were, was peculiarly distressing; but we had no remedy left us, nor could we reasonably complain. Three therefore were selected, and they were sent to deliver their testimony on their arrival in town.

But before the last of these had left the council room, who should come up to me but Mr. Arnold! He had but lately arrived at Bristol from Africa: and having heard from our friends there that we had been daily looking for him, he had come to us in London. He and Mr. Gardiner were the two surgeons, as mentioned in the former volume, who had promised me, when I was in Bristol, in the year 1787, that they would keep a journal of facts for me during the voyages they were then going to perform. They had both of them kept this promise. Gardiner, I found, had died upon the coast, and his journal, having been discovered at his death, had been buried with him in great triumph. But Arnold had survived, and he came now to offer us his services in the cause.

As it was a pity that such correct information as that taken down in writing upon the spot should be lost (for all the other evidences, except Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadstrom, had spoken from their memory only) I made all the interest I could to procure a hearing for Mr. Arnold.

Pleading now for the examination of him only, and under these particular circumstances, I was attended to. It was consented, in consequence of the little time which was now left for preparing and printing the report, that I should make out his evidence from his journal under certain heads. This I did. Mr. Arnold swore to the truth of it, when so drawn up, before Edward Montague, Esquire, a master in chancery. He then delivered the paper in which it was contained to the lords of the council, who, on receiving it, read it throughout, and then questioned him upon it.

At this time, also, my brother returned with accounts and papers relative to the Slave-trade, from Havre de Grace; but as I had pledged myself to offer no other person to be examined, his evidence was lost. Thus, after all the pains we had taken, and in a contest, too, on the success of which our own reputation and the fate of Africa depended, we were obliged to fight the battle with sixteen less than we could have brought into the field; while our opponents, on the other hand, on account of their superiour advantages, had mustered all their forces, not having omitted a single man.

I do not know of any period of my life in which I suffered so much both in body and mind, as from the time of resuming these public inquiries by the privy council, to the time when they were closed. For I had my weekly duty to attend at the committee for the abolition during this interval. I had to take down the examinations of all the evidences who came to London, and to make certain copies of these. I had to summon these to town, and to make provision

against all accidents: and here I was often troubled by means of circumstances, which unexpectedly occurred, lest, when committees of the council had been purposely appointed to hear them, they should not be forthcoming at the time. I had also a new and extensive correspondence to keep up; for the tables of questions which had been sent down to our correspondents, brought letters almost innumerable on this subject, and they were always addressed to me. These not only required answers of themselves, but as they usually related to persons capable of giving their testimony, and contained the particulars of what they could state, they occasioned fresh letters to be written to others. Hence the writing of ten or twelve daily became necessary.

But the contents of these letters, afforded the circumstances which gave birth to so much suffering. They contained usually some affecting tale of woe. At Bristol my feelings had been harassed by the cruel treatment of the seamen, which had come to my knowledge there: but now I was doomed to see this treatment over again in many other melancholy instances; and additionally to take in the various sufferings of the unhappy slaves. These accounts I could seldom get time to read till late in the evening, and sometimes not till midnight, when the letters containing them were to be answered. The effect of these accounts was in some instances to overwhelm me for a time in tears, and in others to produce a vivid indignation, which affected my whole frame. Recovering from these, I walked up and down the room. I felt fresh vigour, and made new determinations of perpetual warfare against this impious trade. I

implored strength that I might proceed. I then sat down, and continued my work as long as my wearied eyes would permit me to see. Having been agitated in this manner, I went to bed: but my rest was frequently broken by the visions which floated before me. When I awoke, these renewed themselves to me, and they flitted about with me for the remainder of the day. Thus I was kept continually harassed: my mind was confined to one gloomy and heart breaking subject for months. It had no respite, and my health began now materially to suffer.

But the contents of these letters were particularly grievous, on account of the severe labours, which they necessarily entailed upon me in other ways than those which have been mentioned. It was my duty, while the privy council examinations went on, not only to attend to all the evidence which was presented to us by our correspondents, but to find out and select the best. The happiness of millions depended upon it. Hence I was often obliged to travel during these examinations, in order to converse with those who had been pointed out to us as capable of giving their testimony; and, that no time might be lost, to do this in the night. More than two hundred miles in a week were sometimes passed over on these occasions.

The disappointments too, which I frequently experienced in these journeys, increased the poignancy of the suffering, which arose from a contemplation of the melancholy cases which I had thus travelled to bring forward to the public view. The reader at present can have no idea of these. I have been sixty miles to visit a person of whom I had heard, not only as possessing



important knowledge, but as espousing our opinions on this subject. I have at length seen him. He has applauded my pursuit at our first interview. He has told me, in the course of our conversation, that neither my own pen, nor that of any other man, could describe adequately the horrors of the Slave-trade, horrors which he himself had witnessed. He has exhorted me to perseverance in this noble cause. Could I have wished for a more favourable reception? But mark the issue. He was the nearest relation of a rich person concerned in the traffic; and if he were to come forward with his evidence publicly, he should ruin all his expectations from that quarter. In the same week I have visited another at a still greater distance. I have met with similar applause. I have heard him describe scenes of misery which he had witnessed, and on the relation of which he himself almost wept. But mark the issue again. "I am a surgeon," says he: "through that window you see a spacious house. It is occupied by a West-Indian. The medical attendance upon his family is of considerable importance to the temporal interests of mine. If I give you my evidence I lose his patronage. At the house above him lives an East-Indian. The two families are connected: I fear, if I lose the support of one, I shall lose that of the other also: but I will give you privately all the intelligence in my power."

The reader may now conceive the many miserable hours I must have spent, after such visits, in returning home; and how grievously my heart must have been afflicted by these cruel disappointments, but more particularly where they arose from causes inferiour to those which have

been now mentioned, or from little frivolous excuses or idle and unfounded conjectures, unworthy of beings expected to fill a moral station in life. Yes, O man! often in these solitary journeyings have I exclaimed against the baseness of thy nature, when reflecting on the little paltry considerations which have smothered thy benevolence, and hindered thee from succouring an oppressed brother. And yet, on a further view of things, I have reasoned myself into a kinder feeling, towards thee. For I have been obliged to consider ultimately, that there were both lights and shades in the human character; and that, if the bad part of our nature was visible on these occasions, the nobler part of it ought not to be forgotten. While I passed a censure upon those, who were backward in serving this great cause of humanity and justice, how many did I know, who were toiling in the support of it! I drew also this consolation from my reflections, that I had done my duty; that I had left nothing untried or undone; that amidst all these disappointments I had collected information, which might be useful at a future time; and that such disappointments were almost inseparable from the prosecution of a cause of such magnitude, and where the interests of so many were concerned.

Having now given a general account of my own proceedings, I shall state those of the committee; or show how they contributed, by fulfilling the duties of their several departments, to promote the cause.

In the first place they completed the rules, or code of laws, for their own government.

They continued to adopt and circulate books,

that they might still enlighten the public mind on the subject, and preserve it interested in favour of their institution. They kept the press almost constantly going for this purpose. They kept up a communication with the different societies established in America.

They directed their attention also to the continent of Europe. They had already applied, as I mentioned before, to the king of Sweden in favour of their cause, and had received a gracious answer. They now attempted to interest other potentates in it. For this purpose they bound up in an elegant manner two sets of the *Essays on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* and on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade, and sent them to the Chevalier de Pinto, in Portugal. They bound up in a similar manner three sets of the same, and sent them to Mr. Eden, (now Lord Auckland,) at Madrid, to be given to the king of Spain, the Count d'Aran-da, and the Marquis del Campomanes.

They kept up their correspondence with the committee at Paris, which had greatly advanced itself in the eyes of the French nation; so that, when the different bailliages sent deputies to the States General, they instructed them to take the Slave-trade into their consideration as a national object, and with a view to its abolition.

But the day was now drawing near, when it was expected that this great contest would be decided. Mr. Wilberforce on the nineteenth of March, rose up in the house of commons, and desired the resolution to be read, by which the house stood pledged to take the Slave-trade into their consideration in the then session. He then moved that the house should resolve itself

into a committee of the whole house on Thursday, the twenty-third of April, for this purpose. This motion was agreed to; after which he moved for certain official documents, necessary to throw light upon the subject in the course of its discussion.

Soon after this, Mr. Pitt presented the privy council report at the bar of the house of commons; and as it was a large folio volume, and contained the evidence upon which the question was to be decided, it was necessary that time should be given to the members to peruse it. Accordingly the twelfth of May was appointed, instead of the twenty-third of April, for the discussion of the question.

This postponement of the discussion of the question, gave time to all parties to prepare themselves thoroughly. The merchants and planters availed themselves of it, to collect petitions to parliament from interested persons, against the abolition of the trade, to wait upon members of parliament by deputation, in order to solicit their attendance in their favour, and to publish the most injurious paragraphs in the public papers. The committee for the abolition availed themselves of it to reply to these; and here Dr. Dickson, who had been secretary to Governour Hey, in Barbadoes, was of singular use. Many members of parliament availed themselves of it to retire into the country to read the report. Among the latter were Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt. In this retirement they discovered, notwithstanding the great disadvantages under which we had laboured with respect to evidence, that our cause was safe, and that as far as it was to be decided by reason and sound policy, it would triumph.

It was in this retirement that Mr. Pitt made those able calculations, which satisfied him for ever after, as the minister of the country, as to the safety of the great measure of the abolition of the Slave-trade; for he had clearly proved, that not only the islands could go on in a flourishing state without supplies from the coast of Africa, but that they were then in a condition to do it.

At length, the twelfth of May arrived. Mr. Wilberforce rose up in the commons, and moved the order of the day for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to take into consideration the petitions, which had been presented against the Slave-trade.

This order having been read, he moved that the report of the committee of privy council; that the acts passed in the islands relative to slaves; that the evidence adduced last year on the Slave-trade; that the petitions offered in the last session against the Slave-trade; and that the accounts presented to the house, in the last and present session, relative to the exports and imports to Africa, be referred to the same committee.

These motions having been severally agreed to, the house immediately resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, and Sir William Dolben was put into the chair.

Mr. Wilberforce began by declaring, that, when he considered how much discussion the subject, which he was about to explain to the committee, had occasioned not only in that house but throughout the kingdom, and throughout Europe; and when he considered the extent and importance of it, the variety of interests involved

in it, and the consequences which might arise, he owned he had been filled with apprehensions, lest a subject of such magnitude and a cause of such weight should suffer from the weakness of its advocate ; but when he recollected that in the progress of his inquiries he had every where been received with candour, that most people gave him credit for the purity of his motives, and that, however many of these might then differ from him, they were all likely to agree in the end, he had dismissed his fears and marched forward with a firmer step in this cause of humanity, justice and religion. He could not, however, but lament that the subject had excited so much warmth. He feared that too many on this account were but ill prepared to consider it with impartiality. He entreated all such to endeavour to be calm and composed. A fair and cool discussion was essentially necessary. The motion he meant to offer was as reconcileable to political expediency as to national humanity. It belonged to no party question. It would in the end be found serviceable to all parties ; and to the best interests of the country. He did not come forward to accuse the West-India planter, or the Liverpool merchant, or indeed any one concerned in this traffic ; but, if blame attached any where, to take shame to himself, in common indeed with the whole parliament of Great-Britain, who, having suffered it to be carried on under their own authority, were all of them participators in the guilt.

In endeavouring to explain the great business of the day, he said he should call the attention of the house only to the leading features of the Slave-trade. Nor should he dwell long upon

these. Every one might imagine for himself, what must be the natural consequence of such a commerce with Africa. Was it not plain that she must suffer from it? that her savage manners must be rendered still more ferocious? and that a trade of this nature, carried on round her coasts, must extend violence and desolation to her very centre? It was well known that the natives of Africa were sold as goods, and that numbers of them were continually conveyed away from their country by the owners of British vessels. The question then was, which way the latter came by them. In answer to this question the privy council report, which was then on the table, afforded evidence the most satisfactory and conclusive. He had found things in it, which had confirmed every proposition he had maintained before, whether this proposition had been gathered from living information of the best authority, or from the histories he had read. But it was unnecessary either to quote the report, or to appeal to history on this occasion. Plain reason and common sense would point out how the poor Africans were obtained. Africa was a country divided into many kingdoms, which had different governments and laws. In many parts the princes were despotic. In others they had a limited rule. But in all of them, whatever the nature of the government was, men were considered as goods and property, and, as such, subject to plunder in the same manner as property in other countries. The persons in power there were naturally fond of our commodities; and to obtain them (which could only be done by the sale of their countrymen) they waged war on one another, or even

ravaged their own country, when they could find no pretence for quarrelling with their neighbours; in their courts of law many poor wretches, who were innocent, were condemned; and, to obtain these commodities in greater abundance, thousands were kidnapped, and torn from their families, and sent into slavery. Such transactions, he said, were recorded in every history of Africa, and the report on the table confirmed them. With respect, however, to these, he should make but one or two observations. If we looked into the reign of Henry the Eighth, we should find a parallel for one of them. We should find that similar convictions took place; and that penalties followed conviction. With respect to wars, the kings of Africa were never induced to engage in them by public principles, by national glory, and least of all by the love of their people. This had been stated by those most conversant in the subject, by Dr. Spaarman and Mr. Wadstrom. They had conversed with these princes, and had learned from their own mouths, that to procure slaves was the object of their hostilities. Indeed, there was scarcely a single person examined before the privy council, who did not prove that the Slave-trade was the source of the tragedies acted upon that extensive continent. Some had endeavoured to palliate this circumstance; but there was not one who did not more or less admit it to be true. By one the Slave-trade was called the concurrent cause, by the majority it was acknowledged to be the principal motive, of the African wars. The same might be said with respect to those instances of treachery and injustice, in which individuals were concerned. And here he was sorry to observe that our own



countrymen were often guilty. He would only at present advert to the tragedy at Calabar, where two large African villages, having been for some time at war, made peace. This peace was to have been ratified by intermarriages; but some of our captains, who were there, seeing their trade would be stopped for a while, sowed dissension again between them. They actually set one village against the other, took a share in the contest, massacred many of the inhabitants, and carried others of them away as slaves. But shocking as this transaction might appear, there was not a single history of Africa to be read, in which scenes of as atrocious a nature were not related. They, he said, who defended this trade, were warped and blinded by their own interests, and would not be convinced of the miseries they were daily heaping on their fellow-creatures. By the countenance they gave it, they had reduced the inhabitants of Africa to a worse state than that of the most barbarous nation. They had destroyed what ought to have been the bond of union and safety among them: they had introduced discord and anarchy among them: they had set kings against their subjects, and subjects against each other: they had rendered every private family wretched: they had, in short, given birth to scenes of injustice and misery not to be found in any other quarter of the globe.

Having said thus much on the subject of procuring slaves in Africa, he would now go to that of the transportation of them. And here he had fondly hoped, that when men with affections and feelings like our own had been torn from their country, and every thing dear to them, he should have found some mitigation of their sufferings:

but the sad reverse was the case. This was the most wretched part of the whole subject. He was incapable of impressing the house with what he felt upon it. A description of their conveyance was impossible. So much misery condensed in so little room was more than the human imagination had ever before conceived. Think only of six hundred persons linked together, trying to get rid of each other, crammed in a close vessel with every object that was nauseous and disgusting, diseased, and struggling with all the varieties of wretchedness. It seemed impossible to add any thing more to human misery. Yet shocking as this description must be felt to be by every man, the transportation had been described by several witnesses from Liverpool to be a comfortable conveyance. Mr. Norris had painted the accommodations on board a slave-ship in the most glowing colours. He had represented them in a manner which would have exceeded his attempts at praise of the most luxurious scenes. Their apartments, he said, were fitted up as advantageously for them as circumstances could possibly admit: they had several meals a day; some, of their own country provisions, with the best sauces of African cookery; and, by way of variety, another meal of pulse, according to the European taste. After breakfast they had water to wash themselves, while their apartments were perfumed with frankincense and lime-juice. Before dinner they were amused after the manner of their country: instruments of music were introduced: the song and the dance were promoted: games of chance were furnished them: the men played and sang, while the women and girls made fanciful orna-

ments from beads, with which they were plentifully supplied. They were indulged in all their little fancies, and kept in sprightly humour. Another of them had said, when the sailors were flogged, it was out of the hearing of the Africans, lest it should depress their spirits. He by no means wished to say that such descriptions were wilful misrepresentations. If they were not, it proved that interest or prejudice was capable of spreading a film over the eyes thick enough to occasion total blindness.

Others, however, and these men of the greatest veracity, had given a different account. What would the house think, when by the concurring testimony of these the true history was laid open? The slaves who had been described as rejoicing in their captivity, were so wrung with misery at leaving their country, that it was the constant practice to set sail in the night, lest they should know the moment of their departure. With respect to their accommodation, the right angle of one was fastened to the left angle of another by an iron fetter; and if they were turbulent, by another on the wrists. Instead of the apartments described, they were placed in niches, and along the decks, in such a manner, that it was impossible for any one to pass among them, however careful he might be, without treading upon them. Sir George Yonge had testified, that in a slave-ship, on board of which he went, and which had not completed her cargo by two hundred and fifty, instead of the scent of frankincense being perceptible to the nostrils, the stench was intolerable. The allowance of water was so deficient, that the slaves were frequently found gasping for life, and almost suffocated. The pulse with

which they had been said to be favoured, were absolutely English horse beans. The legislature of Jamaica had stated the scantiness both of water and provisions, as a subject which called for the interference of parliament. As Mr. Norris had said, the song and the dance were promoted, he could not pass over these expressions without telling the house what they meant. It would have been much more fair if he himself had explained the word *promoted*. The truth was, that, for the sake of exercise, these miserable wretches, loaded with chains and oppressed with disease, were forced to dance by the terror of the lash, and sometimes by the actual use of it. "I," said one of the evidences, "was employed to dance the men, while another person danced the women." Such then was the meaning of the word *promoted*; and it might also be observed with respect to food, that instruments were sometimes carried out, in order to force them to eat; which was the same sort of proof, how much they enjoyed themselves in this instance also. With respect to their singing, it consisted of songs of lamentation for the loss of their country. While they sung they were in tears: so that one of the captains, more humane probably than the rest, threatened a woman with a flogging because the mournfulness of her song was too painful for his feelings. Perhaps he could not give a better proof of the sufferings of these injured people during their passage, than by stating the mortality which accompanied it. This was a species of evidence which was infallible on this occasion. Death was a witness which could not deceive them; and the proportion of deaths would not only confirm, but, if

possible, even aggravate our suspicion of the misery of the transit. It would be found, upon an average of all the ships, upon which evidence had been given, that, exclusively of such as perished before they sailed from Africa, not less than twelve and a half per cent. died on their passage : besides these, the Jamaica report stated that four and a half per cent. died while in the harbours, or on shore before the day of sale, which was only about the space of twelve or fourteen days after their arrival there ; and one third more died in the seasoning : and this in a climate exactly similar to their own, and where, as some of the witnesses pretended, they were healthy and happy. Thus, out of every lot of one hundred, shipped from Africa, seventeen died in about nine weeks, and not more than fifty lived to become effective labourers in our islands.

Having advanced thus far in his investigation, he felt, he said, the wickedness of the Slave-trade to be so enormous, so dreadful, and irremediable, that he could stop at no alternative short of its abolition. A trade founded on iniquity, and carried on with such circumstances of horror, must be abolished, let the policy of it be what it might ; and he had from this time determined, whatever were the consequences, that he would never rest till he had effected that abolition. His mind had indeed been harassed by the objections of the West-India planters, who had asserted, that the ruin of their property must be the consequence of such a measure. He could not help, however, distrusting their arguments. He could not believe that the Almighty Being, who had forbidden the practice of rapine and bloodshed, had made rapine and bloodshed

necessary to any part of his universe. He felt a confidence in this persuasion, and took the resolution to act upon it. Light indeed soon broke in upon him. The suspicion of his mind was every day confirmed by increasing information, and the evidence he had now to offer upon this point was decisive and complete. The principle upon which he founded the necessity of the abolition was not policy, but justice : but, though justice were the principle of the measure, yet he trusted he should distinctly prove it to be reconcilable with our truest political interest.

In the first place, he asserted that the number of the slaves in our West-India islands might be kept up without the introduction of recruits from Africa ; and to prove this, he would enumerate the different sources of their mortality. The first was the disproportion of the sexes, there being, upon an average, about five males imported to three females : but this evil, when the Slave-trade was abolished, would cure itself. The second consisted in the bad condition in which they were brought to the islands, and the methods of preparing them for sale. They arrived frequently in a sickly and disordered state, and then they were made up for the market by the application of astringents, washes, mercurial ointments, and repelling drugs, so that their wounds and diseases might be hid. These artifices were not only fraudulent but fatal : but these, it was obvious, would of themselves fall with the trade. A third was, excessive labour joined with improper food ; and a fourth was, the extreme dissoluteness of their manners. These also would both of them be counteracted by the impossibility of getting further supplies : for

owners, now unable to replace those slaves whom they might lose, by speedy purchases in the markets, would be more careful how they treated them in future, and a better treatment would be productive of better morals. And here he would just advert to an argument used against those who complained of cruelty in our islands, which was, that it was the interest of masters to treat their slaves with humanity: but surely it was immediate and present, not future and distant, interest, which was the great spring of action in the affairs of mankind. Why did we make laws to punish men? It was their interest to be upright and virtuous; but there was a present impulse continually breaking in upon their better judgement, and an impulse, which was known to be contrary to their permanent advantage. It was ridiculous to say that men would be bound by their interest, when gain or ardent passion urged them. It might as well be asserted that a stone could not be thrown into the air, or a body move from place to place, because the principle of gravitation bound them to the surface of the earth. If a planter in the West-Indies found himself reduced in his profits, he did not usually dispose of any part of his slaves; and his own gratifications were never given up, so long as there was a possibility of making any retrenchment in the allowance of his slaves. But to return to the subject which he had left: He was happy to state, that as all the causes of the decrease which he had stated might be remedied, so, by the progress of light and reformation, these remedies had been gradually coming into practice; and that, as these had increased, the decrease of slaves had in an equal proportion

been lessened. By the gradual adoption of these remedies, he could prove from the report on the table, that the decrease of slaves in Jamaica had lessened to such a degree, that from the year 1774 to the present it was not quite one in a hundred, and that in fact they were at present in a state of increase; for that the births in that island, at this moment, exceeded the deaths by one thousand or eleven hundred per annum. Barbadoes, Nevis, Antigua, and the Bermudas, were, like Jamaica, lessening their decrease, and holding forth an evident and reasonable expectation of a speedy state of increase by natural population. But allowing the number of negroes even to decrease for a time, there were methods which would ensure the welfare of the West-India islands. The lands there might be cultivated by fewer hands, and this to greater advantage to the proprietors and to this country, by the produce of cinnamon, coffee, and cotton, than by that of sugar. The produce of the plantations, might also be considerably increased, even in the case of sugar, with less hands than were at present employed, if the owners of them would but introduce machines of husbandry. Mr. Long himself, long resident as a planter, had proved, upon his own estate, that the plough, though so little used in the West-Indies, did the service of a hundred slaves, and caused the same ground to produce three hogsheads of sugar, which, when cultivated by slaves, would only produce two. The division of work, which, in free and civilized countries, was the grand source of wealth, and the reduction of the number of domestic servants, of whom not less than from twenty to forty were kept in ordinary families, afforded other



resources for this purpose. But, granting that all these suppositions should be unfounded, and that every one of these substitutes should fail for a time, the planters would be indemnified, as, is the case in all transactions of commerce, by the increased price of their produce in the British market. Thus, by contending against the abolition, they were defeated in every part of the argument. But he would never give up the point, that the number of slaves could be kept up by natural population, and without any dependence whatever on the Slave-trade. He therefore called upon the house again to abolish it as a criminal waste of life; it was utterly unnecessary; he had proved it so by documents contained in the report. The merchants of Liverpool, indeed, had thought otherwise, but he should be cautious how he assented to their opinions. They declared last year that it was a losing trade at two slaves to a ton, and yet they pursued it when restricted to five slaves to three tons. He believed, however, that it was upon the whole a losing concern; in the same manner as the lottery would be a losing adventure to any company who should buy all the tickets. Here and there an individual gained a large prize, but the majority of adventurers gained nothing. The same merchants, too, had asserted that the town of Liverpool would be ruined by the abolition. But Liverpool did not depend for its consequence upon the Slave-trade. The whole export tonnage from that place amounted to no less than 170,000 tons; whereas the export part of it to Africa amounted only to 13,000. Liverpool, he was sure, owed its greatness to other and very differ-

ent causes ; the Slave-trade bearing but a small proportion to its other trades.

Having gone through that part of the subject which related to the slaves, he would now answer two objections which he had frequently heard started. The first of these was, that the abolition of the Slave-trade would operate to the total ruin of our navy, and to the increase of that of our rivals. For an answer to these assertions, he referred to what he considered to be the most valuable part of the report, and for which the house and the country were indebted to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Clarkson. By the report it appeared, that, instead of the Slave-trade being a nursery for British seamen, it was their grave. It appeared that more seamen died in that trade in one year than in the whole remaining trade of the country in two. Out of 910 sailors in it, 216 died in the year, while upon a fair average of the same number of men employed in the trades to the East and West-Indies, Petersburg, Newfoundland, and Greenland, no more than 87 died. It appeared also, that out of 3170, who had left Liverpool in the slave-ships in the year 1787, only 1428 had returned. And here, while he lamented the loss which the country thus annually sustained in her seamen, he had additionally to lament the barbarous usage which they experienced, and which this trade, by its natural tendency to harden the heart, exclusively produced. He would just read an extract of a letter from Governour Parrey, of Barbadoes, to Lord Sydney, one of the secretaries of State. The Governour declared he could no longer contain himself on account of the ill treatment, which the British sailors endured at

the hands of their savage captains. These were obliged to have their vessels strongly manned, not only on account of the unhealthiness of the climate of Africa, but of the necessity of guarding the slaves, and preventing and suppressing insurrections; and when they arrived in the West-Indies, and were out of all danger from the latter, they quarrelled with their men on the most frivolous pretences, on purpose to discharge them, and thus save the payment of supernumerary wages home. Thus many were left in a diseased and deplorable state; either to perish by sickness, or to enter into foreign service; great numbers of whom were forever lost to their country. The Governour concluded by declaring, that the enormities attendant on this trade were so great, as to demand the immediate interference of the legislature.

The next objection to the abolition was, that if we were to relinquish the Slave-trade, our rivals the French, would take it up; so that, while we should suffer by the measure, the evil would still go on, and this even to its former extent. This was, indeed, a very weak argument; and, if it would defend the continuance of the Slave-trade, might equally be urged in favour of robbery, murder, and every species of wickedness, which, if we did not practise, others would commit. But suppose, for the sake of argument, that they were to take it up, what good would it do them? what advantages, for instance, would they derive from this pestilential commerce to their marine? should not we, on the other hand, be benefited by this change? would they not be obliged to come to us, in consequence of the cheapness of our manufactures, for what

they wanted for the African market? But he would not calumniate the French nation so much as to suppose that they would carry on the trade if we were to relinquish it. He believed, on the other hand, that they would abolish it also. Mr. Necker, the present minister of France, was a man of religious principle; and, in his work upon the administration of the finances, had recorded his abhorrence of this trade. He was happy also to relate an anecdote of the present king of France, which proved that he was a friend to the abolition; for, being petitioned to dissolve a society, formed at Paris, for the annihilation of the Slave-trade, his majesty answered, that he would not, and was happy to hear that so humane an association was formed in his dominions. And here, having mentioned the society in Paris, he could not help paying a due compliment to that established in London for the same purpose, which had laboured with the greatest assiduity to make this important subject understood, and which had conducted itself with so much judgement and moderation as to have interested men of all religions, and to have united them in their cause.

There was another topic which he would submit to the notice of the house before he concluded. They were perhaps not aware, that a fair and honourable trade might be substituted in the natural productions of Africa, so that our connexion with that continent in the way of commercial advantage need not be lost. The natives had already made some advances in it; and if they had not appeared so forward in raising and collecting their own produce for sale as in some other countries it was to be imputed to

the Slave-trade: but remove the cause, and Africa would soon emerge from her present ignorant and indolent state. Civilization would go on with her as well as with other nations. Europe three or four centuries ago was in many parts as barbarous as Africa at present, and chargeable with as bad practices. For, what would be said, if, so late as the middle of the thirteenth century, he could find a parallel there for the Slave-trade? Yes. This parallel was to be found even in England. The people of Bristol, in the reign of Henry the Seventh, had a regular market for children, which were bought by the Irish: but the latter having experienced a general calamity, which they imputed as a judgement from heaven on account of this wicked traffic, abolished it. The only thing, therefore, which he had to solicit of the house, was to show that they were now as enlightened as the Irish were four centuries back, by refusing to buy the children of other nations. He hoped they would do it. He hoped, too, they would do it in an unqualified manner. Nothing less than a total abolition of the trade would do away the evils complained of. The legislature of Jamaica, indeed, had thought that regulations might answer the purpose. Their report had recommended, that no person should be kidnapped, or permitted to be made a slave, contrary to the customs of Africa. But might he not be reduced to this state very unjustly, and yet by no means contrary to the African laws? Besides, how could we distinguish between those who were justly or unjustly reduced to it? Could we discover them by their physiognomy?—But if we could, who would believe that the British cap-

tains would be influenced by any regulations made in this country, to refuse to purchase those who had not been fairly, honestly, and uprightly enslaved? They who were offered to us for sale were brought, some of them, three or four thousand miles, and exchanged like cattle from one to another, till they reached the coast. But who could return these to their homes, or make them compensation for their sufferings during their long journeyings? He would now conclude by begging pardon of the house for having detained them so long. He could indeed have expressed his own conviction in fewer words. He needed only to have made one or two short statements, and to have quoted the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder." But he thought it his duty to lay the whole of the case, and the whole of its guilt, before them. They would see now that no mitigations, no palliatives, would either be efficient or admissible. Nothing short of an absolute abolition could be adopted. This they owed to Africa: they owed it, too, to their own moral characters. And he hoped they would follow up the principle of one of the repentant African captains, who had gone before the committee of privy council as a voluntary witness, and that they would make Africa all the atonement in their power for the multifarious injuries she had received at the hands of British subjects. With respect to these injuries, their enormity and extent, it might be alleged in their excuse, that they were not fully acquainted with them till that moment, and therefore not answerable for their former existence: but now they could no longer plead ignorance concerning them. They had seen them brought directly

before their eyes, and they must decide for themselves, and must justify to the world and their own consciences the facts and principles upon which their decision was formed.

Mr. Wilberforce having concluded his speech, which lasted three hours and a half, read, and laid on the table of the house, as subjects for their future discussion, nine propositions, which he had deduced from the evidence contained in the privy council report, and of which the following is the abridged substance :

1. That the number of slaves annually carried from the coast of Africa, in British vessels, was about 38,000, of which, on an average, 22,500 were carried to the British islands, and that of the latter only 17,500 were retained there.

2. That these slaves, according to the evidence on the table, consisted, first, of prisoners of war ; secondly, of free persons sold for debt, or on account of real or imputed crimes, particularly adultery and witchcraft ; in which cases they were frequently sold with their whole families, and sometimes for the profit of those by whom they were condemned ; thirdly, of domestic slaves sold for the profit of their masters, in some places at the will of the masters, and in others, on being condemned by them for real or imputed crimes ; fourthly, of persons made slaves by various acts of oppression, violence, or fraud, committed either by the princes and chiefs of those countries on their subjects, or by private individuals on each other ; or, lastly, by Europeans engaged in this traffic.

3. That the trade so carried on had necessarily a tendency to occasion frequent and cruel wars among the natives ; to produce unjust con-

victions and punishments for pretended or aggravated crimes; to encourage acts of oppression, violence, and fraud, and to obstruct the natural course of civilization and improvement in those countries.

4. That Africa in its present state furnished several valuable articles of commerce which were partly peculiar to itself, but that it was adapted to the production of others, with which we were now either wholly or in great part supplied by foreign nations. That an extensive commerce with Africa might be substituted in these commodities, so as to afford a return for as many articles as had annually been carried thither in British vessels: and, lastly, that such a commerce might reasonably be expected to increase by the progress of civilization there.

5. That the Slave-trade was peculiarly destructive to the seamen employed in it; and that the mortality there had been much greater than in any British vessels employed upon the same coast in any other service or trade.

6. That the mode of transporting the slaves from Africa to the West-Indies necessarily exposed them to many and grievous sufferings, for which no regulations could provide an adequate remedy; and that in consequence thereof a large proportion had annually perished during the voyage.

7. That a large proportion had also perished in the harbours in the West-Indies, from the diseases contracted in the voyage and the treatment of the same, previously to their being sold, and that this loss amounted to four and a half per cent. of the imported slaves.

8. That the loss of the newly imported slaves,



within the three first years after their importation, bore a large proportion to the whole number imported.

9. That the natural increase of population among the slaves in the islands, appeared to have been impeded principally by the following causes: First, By the inequality of the sexes in the importations from Africa. Secondly, By the general dissoluteness of manners among the slaves, and the want of proper regulations for the encouragement of marriages and of rearing children among them. Thirdly, By the particular diseases which were prevalent among them, and which were in some instances to be attributed to too severe labour, or rigorous treatment, and in others to insufficient or improper food. Fourthly, By those diseases, which affected a large proportion of negro children in their infancy, and by those, to which the negroes newly imported from Africa had been found to be particularly liable.

These propositions having been laid upon the table of the house, lord Penrhyn rose in behalf of the planters, and next after him, Mr. Gascoyne (both members for Liverpool) in behalf of the merchants concerned in the latter place. They both predicted the ruin and misery, which would inevitably follow the abolition of the trade. The former said, that no less than seventy millions were mortgaged upon lands in the West-Indies, all of which would be lost. Mr. Wilberforce therefore should have made a motion to pledge the house to the repayment of this sum, before he had brought forward his propositions. Compensation ought to have been agreed upon as a previously necessary measure. The latter

said, that in consequence of the bill of last year many ships were laid up and many seamen out of employ. His constituents had large capitals engaged in the trade, and, if it were to be wholly done away, they would suffer from not knowing where to employ them. They both joined in asserting, that Mr. Wilberforce had made so many misrepresentations in all the branches of this subject, that no reliance whatever was to be placed on the picture, which he had chosen to exhibit. They should speak however more fully to this point, when the propositions were discussed.

The latter declaration called up Mr. Wilberforce again, who observed, that he had no intention of misrepresenting any fact. He did not know that he had done it in any one instance; but, if he had, it would be easy to convict him out of the report upon the table.

Mr. Burke then rose. He would not, he said, detain the committee long. Indeed he was not able, weary and indisposed as he then felt himself, even if he had an inclination to do it; but as, on account of his other parliamentary duty, he might not have it in his power to attend the business now before them in its course, he would take that opportunity of stating his opinion upon it.

And, first, the house, the nation, and all Europe were under great obligations to Mr. Wilberforce for having brought this important subject forward. He had done it in a manner the most masterly, impressive, and eloquent. He had laid down his principles so admirably, and with so much order and force, that his speech had equalled any thing he had ever heard in modern

oratory, and perhaps it had not been excelled by any thing to be found in ancient times. As to the Slave-trade itself, there could not be two opinions about it where men were not interested. A trade, begun in savage war, prosecuted with unheard of barbarity, continued during the transportation with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ending in perpetual exile and slavery, was a trade so horrid in all its circumstances, that it was impossible to produce a single argument in its favour. On the ground of prudence, nothing could be said in defence of it; nor could it be justified by necessity. It was necessity alone, that could be brought to justify inhumanity; but no case of necessity could be made out strong enough to justify this monstrous traffic. It was therefore the duty of the house to put an end to it, and this without further delay.

With respect to the consequences mentioned by the two members for Liverpool, he had a word or two to offer upon them. Lord Penrhyn had talked of millions to be lost and paid for. But seeing no probability of any loss ultimately, he could see no necessity for compensation. He believed, on the other hand, that the planters would be great gainers by those wholesome regulations, which they would be obliged to make, if the Slave-trade were abolished. He did not however flatter them with the idea that this gain would be immediate. Perhaps they might experience inconveniences at first, and even some loss. But what then? with their loss, their virtue would be the greater. And in this light he hoped the house would consider the matter; for, if they were called upon to do an act of virtuous energy and heroism, they ought to think it right

to submit to temporary disadvantages for the sake of truth, justice, humanity, and the prospect of greater happiness.

The other member, Mr. Gascoyne, had said, that his constituents, if the trade were abolished, could not employ their capitals elsewhere. But whether they could or not, it was the duty of that house, if they put them into a traffic, which was shocking to humanity and disgraceful to the nation, to change their application, and not to allow them to be used to a barbarous purpose. He believed, however, that the merchants of Liverpool would find no difficulty on this head. All capitals required active motion. It was in their nature not to remain passive and unemployed. They would soon turn them into other channels. This they had done themselves during the American war; for the Slave-trade was then almost wholly lost, and yet they had their ships employed, either, as transports in the service of government, or in other ways.

And as he now called upon the house not to allow any conjectural losses to become impediments in the way of the abolition of the Slave-trade, so he called upon them to beware how they suffered any representations of the happiness of the state of slavery in our islands to influence them against so glorious a measure. Nothing made a happy slave but a degraded man. In proportion as the mind grows callous to its degradation, and all sense of manly pride is lost, the slave feels comfort. In fact, he is no longer a man. If he were to define a man, he would say with Shakspeare,

“Man is a being holding large discourse,  
Looking before and after.”

But a slave was incapable of looking before and after. He had no motive to do it. He was a mere passive instrument in the hands of others, to be used at their discretion. Though living, he was dead as to all voluntary agency. Though moving amidst the creation with an erect form, and with the shape and semblance of a human being, he was a nullity as a man.

Mr. Fox observed, that a trade in human flesh and sinews was so scandalous, that it ought not openly to be carried on by any government whatever, and much less by that of a Christian country. With regard to the regulation of the Slave-trade, he knew of no such thing as a regulation of robbery and murder. There was no medium. The legislature must either abolish it, or plead guilty of all the wickedness which had been shown to attend it. He would now say a word or two with respect to the conduct of foreign nations on this subject. It was possible that these, when they heard that the matter had been discussed in that house, might follow the example, or they might go before us and set one themselves. If this were to happen, though we might be the losers, humanity would be the gainer. He himself had been thought sometimes to use expressions relative to France, which were too harsh, and as if he could only treat her as the enemy of this country. Politically speaking, France was our rival. But he well knew the distinction between political enmity and illiberal prejudice. If there was any great and enlightened nation in Europe, it was France, which was as likely as any country upon the face of the globe to catch a spark from the light of our fire, and to act upon the present subject with

warmth and enthusiasm. France had often been improperly stimulated by her ambition; and he had no doubt but that, in the present instance, she would readily follow its honourable dictates.

Aldermen Newnham, Sawbridge, and Watson, though they wished well to the cause of humanity, could not, as representatives of the city of London, give their concurrence to a measure, which would injure it so essentially as that of the abolition of the Slave-trade. This trade might undoubtedly be put under wholesome regulations, and made productive of great commercial advantages. But, if it were abolished, it would render the city of London one scene of bankruptcy and ruin. It became the house to take care, while they were giving way to the goodness of their hearts, that they did not contribute to the ruin of the mercantile interests of their country.

Mr. Martin stated, that he was so well satisfied with the speech of the honourable gentleman, who had introduced the propositions, and with the language held out by other distinguished members on this subject, that he felt himself more proud than ever of being an Englishman. He hoped and believed, that the melancholy predictions of the worthy aldermen would not prove true, and that the citizens of London would have too much public spirit to wish that a great national object, which comprehended the great duties of humanity and justice, should be set aside, merely out of consideration to their own private interests.

Mr. William Smith would not detain the house long at that late hour upon this important sub-

ject; but he could not help testifying the great satisfaction he felt at the manner, in which the honourable gentleman who opened the debate (if it could be so called) had treated it. He approved of the propositions as the best mode of bringing the decision to a happy issue. He gave Mr. Fox great credit for the open and manly way, in which he had manifested his abhorrence of this trade, and for the support he meant to give to the total and unqualified abolition of it; for he was satisfied, that the more it was inquired into, the more it would be found that nothing short of abolition would cure the evil. With respect to certain assertions of the members for Liverpool, and certain melancholy predictions about the consequences of such an event, which others had held out, he desired to lay in his claim for observation upon them, when the great question should come before the house.

Soon after this the house broke up; and the discussion of the propositions, which was the next parliamentary measure intended, was postponed to a future day, which was sufficiently distant to give all the parties concerned, time to make the necessary preparation for it.

Of this interval the committee for the abolition availed themselves to thank Mr. Wilberforce for the very able and satisfactory manner, in which he had stated to the house his propositions for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and for the unparalleled assiduity and perseverance, with which he had all along endeavoured to accomplish this object, as well as to take measures themselves for the further promotion of it. Their opponents availed themselves of this interval also. But that, which now embarrassed them,

was the evidence contained in the privy council report. They had no idea, considering the number of witnesses they had sent to be examined, that this evidence, when duly weighed, could by right reasoning have given birth to the sentiments, which had been displayed in the speeches of the most distinguished members of the house of commons, or to the contents of the propositions, which had been laid upon their table. They were thunder-struck as it were by their own weakness: and from this time they were determined, if possible, to get rid of it as a standard for decision, or to interpose every parliamentary delay in their power.

On the twenty-first of May, the subject came again before the attention of the house. It was ushered in, as was expected, by petitions collected in the interim, and which were expressive of the frightful consequences, which would attend the abolition of the Slave-trade.

Mr. Wilberforce moved the order of the day, for the house to go into a committee of the whole house on the report of the privy council, and the several matters of evidence already upon the table relative to the Slave-trade.

Mr. Alderman Sawbridge immediately arose, and asked Mr. Wilberforce, if he meant to adduce any other evidence, besides that in the privy council report, in behalf of his propositions, or to admit other witnesses, if such could be found, to invalidate them. Mr. Wilberforce replied, that he was quite satisfied with the report on the table. It would establish all his propositions. He should call no witnesses himself: as to permission to others to call them, that must be determined by the house.



This question and this answer gave birth immediately to great disputes upon the subject. Aldermen Sawbridge, Newnham, and Watson; Lords Penrhyn and Maitland; Messrs. Gascoyne, Marsham, and others spoke against the admission of the evidence, which had been laid upon the table. They contended, that it was insufficient, defective, and contradictory; that it was *ex parte* evidence;\* that it had been manufactured by ministers; that it was founded chiefly on hearsay, and that the greatest part of it was false; that it had undergone no cross-examination; that it was unconstitutional; and that, if they admitted it, they would establish a dangerous precedent, and abandon their rights. It was urged on the other hand by Mr. Courtenay, that it could not be *ex parte* evidence, because it contained testimony on both sides of the question. The circumstance also of its being contradictory, which had been alleged against it, proved that it was the result of an impartial examination. Mr. Fox observed, that it was perfectly admissible. He called upon those, who took the other side of the question, to say why, if it was really inadmissible, they had not opposed it at first. It had now been a long time on the table, and no fault had been found with it. The truth was, it did not suit them, and they were determined by a side wind as it were to put an end to the inquiry.

In the course of the debate much warmth of temper was manifest on both sides. The expression of Mr. Fox in a former debate, "that the Slave-trade could not be regulated, because there could be no regulation of robbery and

\* Evidence on one side only.

murder," was brought up, and construed by planters in the house as a charge of these crimes upon themselves. Mr. Fox, however, would not retract the expression. He repeated it. He had no notion, however, that any individual would have taken it to himself. If it contained any reflection at all, it was on the whole parliament, who had sanctioned such a trade. Mr. Molyneux rose up, and animadverted severely on the character of Mr. Ramsay, one of the evidences in the privy council report, during his residence in the West-Indies. This called up Sir William Dolben and Sir Charles Middleton in his defence, the latter of whom bore honourable testimony to his virtues from an intimate acquaintance with him, and a residence in the same village with him, for twenty years. Mr. Molyneux spoke also in angry terms of the measure of the abolition. To annihilate the trade, he said, and to make no compensation on account of it, was an act of swindling. Mr. Macnamara called the measure hypocritical, fanatic, and methodistical. Mr. Pitt was so irritated at the insidious attempt to set aside the privy council report, when no complaint had been alleged against it before, that he was quite off his guard, and he thought it right afterwards to apologize for the warmth into which he had been betrayed. The Speaker too was obliged frequently to interfere. On this occasion no less than thirty members spoke. And there had probably been few seasons, when so much disorder had been discoverable in that house.

The result of the debate was, a permission to those interested in the continuance of the Slave-trade to bring counsel to the bar on the twenty-

sixth of May, and then to introduce such witnesses, as might throw further light on the propositions in the shortest time : for Mr. Pitt only acquiesced in this new measure on a supposition, "that there would be no unnecessary delay, as he could by no means submit to the ultimate procrastination of so important a business." He even hoped (and in this hope he was joined by Mr. Fox) that those concerned would endeavour to bring the whole of the evidence they meant to offer at the first examination.

On the day appointed, the house met for the purposes now specified ; when Alderman Newnham, thinking that such an important question should not be decided but in a full assembly of the representatives of the nation, moved for a call of the house on that day fortnight. Mr. Wilberforce stated that he had no objection to such a measure ; believing the greater the number present the more favourable it would be to his cause. This motion, however, produced a debate and a division, in which it appeared that there were one hundred and fifty-eight in favour of it, and twenty-eight against it. The business of the day now commenced. The house went into a committee, and Sir William Dolben was put into the chair. Mr. Serjeant Le Blanc was then called in. He made an able speech in behalf of his clients : and introduced John Barnes, Esquire, as his first witness, whose examination took up the remainder of the day. By this step they, who were interested in the continuance of the trade, attained their wishes, for they had now got possession of the ground with their evidence ; and they knew they could keep it, almost as long as they pleased, for the purposes of de-

lay. Thus they, who boasted, when the privy council examinations began that they would soon do away all the idle talk which had been invented against them, and who desired the public only to suspend their judgement till the report should come out, when they would see the folly and wickedness of all our allegations, dared not abide by the evidence, which they themselves had taught others to look up to as the standard by which they were desirous of being judged: thus they, who had advantages beyond measure in forming a body of evidence in their own favour, abandoned that, which they had collected. And here it is impossible for me not to make a short comparative statement on this subject, if it were only to show how little can be made out, with the very best opportunities, against the cause of humanity and religion. With respect to ourselves, we had almost all our witnesses to seek. We had to travel after them for weeks together. When we found them, we had scarcely the power of choice. We were obliged to take them as they came. When we found them, too, we had generally to implore them to come forward in our behalf. Of those so implored three out of four refused, and the plea for this refusal was a fear lest they should injure their own interest. The merchants, on the other hand, had their witnesses ready on the spot. They had always ships in harbour containing persons, who had a knowledge of the subject. They had several also from whom to choose. If one man was favourable to their cause in three of the points belonging to it, but was unfavourable in the fourth, he could be put aside and replaced. When they had thus selected them,

they had not to entreat, but to command, their attendance. They had no fear, again, when they thus commanded, of a refusal on the ground of interest; because these were promoting their interest by obliging those who employed them. Viewing these and other circumstances, which might be thrown into this comparative statement, it was some consolation to us to know, amidst the disappointment which this new measure occasioned, and our apparent defeat in the eyes of the public, that we had really beaten our opponents at their own weapons, and that, as this was a victory in our own private feelings, so it was the presage to us of a future triumph.

At length, on the ninth of June, by which time it was supposed that new light, and this in sufficient quantity, would have been thrown upon the propositions, it appeared that only two witnesses had been fully heard. The examinations, therefore, were continued, and they went on till the twenty-third. On this day, the order for the call of the house, which had been prolonged, standing unrepealed, there was a large attendance of members. A motion was then made to get rid of the business altogether, but it failed. It was now seen, however, that it was impossible to bring the question to a final decision in this session, for they, who were interested in it, affirmed that they had yet many important witnesses to introduce. Alderman Newnham, therefore, by the consent of Mr. Wilberforce, moved, that, "the further consideration of the subject be deferred to the next session." On this occasion, Mr. William Smith remarked, that though the decision on the great question was thus to be adjourned, he hoped the examinations, at

least, would be permitted to go on. He had not heard any good reason, why they might not be carried on for some weeks longer. It was known that the hearing of evidence was at all times thinly attended. If therefore the few members, who did attend, were willing to give up their time a little longer, why should other members complain of an inconvenience in the suffering of which they took no share? He thought that by this proceeding the examination of witnesses on the part of the merchants might be finished, and of consequence the business brought into a very desirable state of forwardness against the ensuing session. These observations had not the desired effect, and the motion of Mr. Alderman Newnham was carried without a division. Thus the great question, for the elucidation of which all the new evidences were to be heard at the very first examination, in order that it might be decided by the ninth of June, was by the intrigue of our opponents deferred to another year.

The committee, at the conclusion of the session of parliament, made a suitable report. It will be unnecessary to detail this for obvious reasons. There was, however, one thing contained in it, which ought not to be omitted. It stated, with appropriate concern, the death of the first controversial writer, and of one of the most able and indefatigable labourers, in their cause. Mr. Ramsay had been for some time indisposed. The climate of the West-Indies, during a residence of twenty years, and the agitation in which his mind had been kept for the last four years of his life, in consequence of the virulent attacks on his word and character by those interested in the continuance of the trade, had contributed to un-

dermine his constitution. During his whole illness he was cheerful and composed ; nor did he allow it to hinder him, severe as it was, from taking any opportunity which afforded of serving those unhappy persons, for whose injuries he had so deeply felt.

Mr. Ramsay was a man of active habit, of diligence and perseverance in his undertakings, and of extraordinary application. He was of mild and humble manners. He possessed a strong understanding, with great coolness and courage. Patriotism and public spirit were striking traits in his character. In domestic life he was amiable : in the ministry, exemplary and useful ; and he died to the great regret of his parishioners, but most of all to that of those, who moved with him in his attempts to bring about the important event of the abolition of the Slave-trade.



## CHAPTER II.

*Continuation from July 1789 to July 1790—*

*Author travels to Paris to promote the abolition in France—no success—returns to England—Examination of merchants' and planters' evidence resumed in the House of Commons—Author travels in search of evidence in favour of the abolition—Opposition to the hearing of it—This evidence is at length introduced—Cowper's Negro's Complaint—Wedgewood's Cameos.*

Mr. Wilberforce, always solicitous for the good of this great cause, was of opinion, that, as commotions had taken place in France, which then

aimed at political reforms, it was possible that the leading persons concerned in them might, if an application were made to them judiciously, be induced to take the Slave-trade into their consideration, and incorporate it among the abuses to be done away. Such a measure, if realized, would not only lessen the quantity of human suffering, but annihilate a powerful political argument against us. He had a conference therefore with the committee on this subject; and, as they accorded with his opinion, they united with him in writing a letter to me, to know if I would change my journey, and proceed to France.

As I had no object in view but the good of the cause, it was immaterial to me where I went, if I could but serve it; and therefore, without any further delay, I prepared for the journey.

In Paris I found many fast friends of the great cause to which I had devoted my own life; amongst them were the Duke de La Rochefoucauld, the Marquis de Condorcet, Claviere, Brissot, Mirabeau, La Fayette, and Necker. My principal object during my stay in this kingdom was to procure the abolition of the Slave-trade by the National Assembly. To prepare the way for this desirable result I laboured for a number of months, and laboured in vain. Though this great cause embraced as its friends some of the most distinguished characters and was aided by the most powerful talents of the nation, yet it failed. Mirabeau lent his whole strength and influence to it. We had much correspondence on the subject.

I had sent him a letter every other day for a whole month, which contained from sixteen to



twenty pages. He usually acknowledged the receipt of each. Hence many of his letters came into my possession. These were always interesting, on account of the richness of the expressions they contained. Mirabeau even in his ordinary discourse was eloquent. It was his peculiar talent to use such words, that they who heard them, were almost led to believe, that he had taken great pains to cull them for the occasion. But this his ordinary language was the language also of his letters; and they show a power of expression, by which the reader may judge of the character of the eloquence of one, who was then undoubtedly the greatest orator in France.

Mirabeau had consented to bring the question of the abolition before the National Assembly, if he should find upon canvassing the members that there was any probability that it would succeed. But when he found, upon examination, that many were not ready to abolish the trade until England should do it, or give a pledge that it should be immediately done; and that under existing circumstances the question of the abolition would receive in the Assembly a very inadequate support, it was thought judicious, for the present, to drop the matter entirely.

On conversing with the Marquis de La Fayette, he lamented deeply the unfavourable turn, which the cause of the negroes had lately taken in the Assembly. It was entirely owing to the daily intrigues of the white colonists. With respect to the abolition of the Slave-trade, it might yet be carried; but not unless England would concur in the measure. On this topic he enlarged with much feeling. He hoped the day was near

at hand, when two great nations, which had been hitherto distinguished only for their hostility, one toward the other, would unite in so sublime a measure ; and that they would follow up their union by another still more lovely, for the preservation of eternal and universal peace. Thus their future rivalships might have the extraordinary merit of being rivalships in good.

I left France, as it may be easily imagined, much disappointed, that my labours, which had been of nearly six months continuance, should have had no better success ; nor did I see, in looking forward, any circumstances that were consoling with respect to the issue of them there.

I had but just arrived in England when Mr. Wilberforce made a new motion in the house of commons on the subject of the Slave-trade. In referring to the transactions of the last sessions, he found that twenty-eight days had been allotted to the hearing of witnesses against the abolition, and that eleven persons only had been examined in that time. If the examinations were to go on in the same manner, they might be made to last for years. He resolved therefore to move, that, instead of hearing evidence in future in the house at large, members should hear it in an open committee above stairs ; which committee should sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the house itself. This motion he made ; and in doing it he took an opportunity of correcting an erroneous report ; which was, that he had changed his mind on this great subject. This was, he said, so far from being the case, that the more he contemplated the trade, the more enormous he found it, and the more he felt himself compelled to persevere in endeavours for its abolition.

One would have thought that a motion, so reasonable and so constitutional, would have met with the approbation of all ; but it was vehemently opposed by Mr. Gascoyne, Alderman Newnham and others. The plea set up was, that there was no precedent for referring a question of such importance to a committee. It was now obvious, that the real object of our opponents in abandoning decision by the privy council evidence was delay. Unable to meet us there, they were glad to fly to any measure, which should enable them to put off the evil day. This charge was fixed upon them in unequivocal language by Mr. Fox ; who observed besides, that if the members of the house should then resolve to hear evidence in a committee of the whole house as before, it would amount to a resolution, that the question of the abolition of the Slave-trade should be put by, or at least that it should never be decided by them. After a long debate, the motion of Mr. Wilberforce was voted without a division ; and the examination of witnesses proceeded in behalf of those who were interested in the continuance of the trade.

This measure having been resolved upon, by which dispatch in the examinations was promoted, I was alarmed lest we should be called upon for our own evidence, before we were fully prepared. The time which I had originally allotted for the discovery of new witnesses, had been taken up, if not wasted, in France. In looking over the names of the sixteen, who were to have been examined by the committee of privy council if there had been time, one had died, and eight, who were seafaring people, were out of

the kingdom. It was time therefore to stir immediately in this business. Happily, on looking over my letters, which I found on my arrival in England, the names of several had been handed to me, with the places of their abode, who could give me information of the subject of our question. All these I visited with the utmost dispatch. I was absent only three weeks. I had travelled a thousand miles in this time, had conversed with seventeen persons, and had prevailed upon three to be examined.

I had scarcely returned with the addition of these witnesses to my list, when I found it necessary to go out again upon the same errand. This second journey arose in part from the following circumstances. There was a matter in dispute relative to the mode of obtaining slaves in the rivers of Calabar and Bonny. It was usual, when the slave-ships lay there, for a number of canoes to go into the inland country. These went in a fleet. There might be from thirty to forty armed natives in each of them. Every canoe also had a four or a six pounder, cannon, fastened to her bow. Equipped in this manner they departed; and they were usually absent from eight to fourteen days. It was said that they went to fairs, which were held on the banks of these rivers, and at which there was a regular show of slaves. On their return they usually brought down from eight hundred to a thousand of these for the ships. These lay at the bottom of the canoes; their arms and legs having been first bound by the ropes of the country. Now the question was. how the people, thus going up these rivers, obtained their slaves?

It was certainly a very suspicious circumstance,

that such a number of persons should go out upon these occasions; and that they should be armed in such a manner. We presumed therefore, that, though they might buy many of the slaves, whom they brought down, at the fairs, which have been mentioned, they obtained others by violence, as opportunity offered. This inference we pressed upon our opponents; and called upon them to show what circumstances made such warlike preparations necessary on these excursions. To this they replied readily. The people in the canoes, said they, pass through the territories of different petty princes; to each of whom, on entering his territory, they pay a tribute or toll. This tribute has been long fixed; but attempts frequently have been made to raise it. They who follow the trade cannot afford to submit to these unreasonable demands; and therefore they arm themselves in case of any determination on the part of these petty princes to enforce them.

This answer we never judged to be satisfactory. We tried therefore to throw light upon the subject, by inquiring if the natives, who went up on these expeditions, usually took with them as many goods, as would amount to the number of the slaves they were accustomed to bring back with them. But we could get no direct answer, from any actual knowledge, to this question. All had seen the canoes go out and return; but no one had seen them loaded, nor had been on board them. It appeared, however, from circumstantial evidence, that though the natives on these occasions might take some articles of trade with them, it was impossible from appearances, that they could take them in the proportion men-

tioned. We maintained then our inference as before ; but it was still uniformly denied.

How then were we to decide this important question ? for it was said, that no white man was ever permitted by the natives to go up in these canoes. On mentioning accidentally the circumstances of the case, as I have now stated them, to a friend, immediately on my return from my last journey, he informed me, that he himself had been in company, about a year before, with a sailor, a very respectable looking man, who had been up these rivers. He had spent half an hour with him at an inn. He described his person to me. But he knew nothing of his name, or of the place of his abode. All he knew was, that he was either going, or that he belonged to, some ship of war in ordinary ; but he could not tell at what port. I might depend upon all these circumstances, if the man had not deceived him ; and he saw no reason why he should.

I felt myself set on fire, as it were, by this intelligence, deficient as it was ; and I ~~seemed~~ to determine instantly that I would, if it were possible, find him out. For if our suspicions were true, that the natives frequently were kidnapped in these expeditions, it would be of great importance to the cause of the abolition to have them confirmed ; for as many slaves came annually from these two rivers, as from all the coast of Africa besides. But how to proceed on so blind an errand was the question. I first thought of trying to trace the man by letter. But this might be tedious. The examinations were now going on rapidly. We should soon be called upon for evidence ourselves. Besides, I knew nothing of

his name. I then thought it to be a more effectual way to apply to Sir Charles Middleton, as comptroller of the navy, by whose permission I could board every ship of war in ordinary in England, and judge for myself. But here the undertaking seemed very arduous; and the time it would consume became an objection in this respect, that I thought I could not easily forgive myself, if I were to fail in it. My inclination, however, preponderated this way. At length I determined to follow it; for, on deliberate consideration, I found that I could not employ my time more advantageously to the cause; for as other witnesses must be found out somewhere, it was highly probable that, if I should fail in the discovery of this man, I should, by moving among such a number of seafaring people, find others, who could give their testimony in our favour.

I must now inform the reader, that ships of war in ordinary, in one of which this man was reported to be, are those, which are out of commission, and which are laid up in the different rivers and waters in the neighbourhood of the king's dock-yards. Every one of these have a boatswain, gunner, carpenter, and assistants on board. They lie usually in divisions of ten or twelve; and a master in the navy has a command over every division.

At length I began my journey. I boarded all the ships of war lying in ordinary at Deptford, and examined the different persons in each. From Deptford I proceeded to Woolwich, where I did the same. Thence I hastened to Chatham, and then, down the Medway, to Sheerness. I had now boarded above a hundred and sixty ves-

sels of war. I had found out two good and willing evidences among them. But I could gain no intelligence of him who was the object of my search.

From Chatham, I made the best of my way to Portsmouth harbour. A very formidable task presented itself here. But the masters' boats were ready for me; and I continued my pursuit. On boarding the *Pegase*, on the second day, I discovered a very respectable person in the gunner of that ship. His name was George Millar. He had been on board the *Canterbury* slave-ship at the dreadful massacre at Calabar. He was the only disinterested evidence living, of whom I had yet heard. He expressed his willingness to give his testimony, if his presence should be thought necessary in London. I then continued my pursuit for the remainder of the day. On the next day, I resumed and finished it for this quarter. I had now examined the different persons in more than a hundred vessels in this harbour, but I had not discovered the person I had gone to seek.

Matters now began to look rather disheartening, I mean, as far as my grand object was concerned. There was but one other port left, and this was between two and three hundred miles distant. I determined however to go to Plymouth. I had already been more successful in this tour, with respect to obtaining general evidence, than in any other of the same length; and the probability was, that, as I should continue to move among the same kind of people, my success would be in a similar proportion according to the number visited. These were great encouragements to me to proceed. At length, I



arrived at the place of my last hope. On my first day's expedition I boarded forty vessels, but found no one in these, who had been on the coast of Africa in the Slave-trade. One or two had been there in king's ships; but they had never been on shore. Things were now drawing near to a close; and notwithstanding my success as to general evidence in this journey, my heart began to beat. I was restless and uneasy during the night. The next morning, I felt agitated again between the alternate pressure of hope and fear; and in this state I entered my boat. The fifty-seventh vessel, which I boarded in this harbour, was the *Melampus* frigate. One person belonging to it, on examining him in the captain's cabin, said he had been two voyages to Africa; and I had not long discoursed with him before I found, to my inexpressible joy, that he was the man. I found too, that he unravelled the question in dispute precisely as our inferences had determined it. He had been two expeditions up the river Calabar, in the canoes of the natives. In the first of these, they came within a certain distance of a village. They then concealed themselves under the bushes, which hung over the water from the banks. In this position they remained during daylight. But at night they went up to it armed; and seized all the inhabitants, who had not time to make their escape. They obtained forty-five persons in this manner. In the second they were out eight or nine days; when they made a similar attempt, and with nearly similar success. They seized men, women, and children, as they could find them in the huts. They then bound their arms, and drove them before them to the canoes. The

name of the person, thus discovered on board the *Melampus*, was Isaac Parker. On inquiring into his character from the master of the division, I found it highly respectable. I found also afterwards, that he had sailed with captain Cook, with great credit to himself, round the world. It was also remarkable that my brother, on seeing him in London, when he went to deliver his evidence, recognized him as having served on board the *Mornach* man-of-war, and as one of the most exemplary men in that ship.

I returned now in triumph. I had been out only three weeks, and I had found out this extraordinary person, and five respectable witnesses besides. These, added to the three discovered in the last journey, and to those provided before, made us more formidable than at any former period; so that the delay of our opponents, which we had looked upon as so great an evil, proved in the end truly serviceable to our cause.

On going into the committee room of the house of commons on my return, I found that the examinations were still going on in the behalf of those, who were interested in the continuance of the trade; and they went on beyond the middle of April, when it was considered that they had closed. Mr. Wilberforce moved accordingly on the twenty-third of the same month, that captain Thomas Wilson, of the royal navy, and that Charles Berns Wadstrom and Henry Hew Dalrymple, Esquires, do attend as witnesses on the behalf of the abolition. There was nothing now but clamour from those on the opposite side of the question. They knew well, that there were but few members of the house of commons, who

had read the privy council report. They knew therefore, that if the question were to be decided by evidence, it must be decided by that, which their own witnesses had given before parliament. But this was the evidence only on one side. It was certain therefore, if the decision were to be made upon this basis, that it must be entirely in their favour. Will it then be believed that in an English house of commons there could be found persons, who could move to prevent the hearing of any other witnesses on this subject; and, what is more remarkable, that they should charge Mr. Wilberforce, because he proposed the hearing of them, with the intention solely of delay? Yes. Such persons were found, but, happily, only among the friends of the Slave-trade. Mr. Wilberforce, in replying to them, could not help observing, that it was rather extraordinary that they, who had occasioned the delay of a whole year, should charge him with that of which they themselves had been so conspicuously guilty. He then commented for some time on the injustice of their motion. He stated too, that he would undertake to remove from disinterested and unprejudiced persons many of the impressions, which had been made by the witnesses against the abolition; and he appealed to the justice and honour of the house in behalf of an injured people; under the hope, that they would not allow a decision to be made till they had heard the whole of the case. These observations, however, did not satisfy all those, who belonged to the opposite party. Lord Penrhyn contended for a decision without a moment's delay. Mr. Gascoyne relented; and said, he would allow three weeks to the abolitionists,

during which their evidence might be heard. At length the debate ended; in the course of which, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox powerfully supported Mr. Wilberforce; when the motion was negatived without any attempt at a division.

The witnesses in behalf of the abolition of the Slave-trade now took possession of the ground, which those in favour of it had left. But what was our surprise, when only three of them had been heard, to find that Mr. Norris should come forward as an evidence! This he did to confirm what he had stated to the privy council as to the general question; but he did it more particularly, as it appeared afterwards, in the justification of his own conduct: for the part, which he had taken at Liverpool, as it related to me, had become a subject of conversation with many. It was now well known, what assistance he had given me there in my pursuit; how he had even furnished me with clauses for a bill for the abolition of the trade; how I had written to him, in consequence of his friendly cooperation, to come up as an evidence in our favour; and how at that moment he had accepted the office of a delegate on the contrary side. The noise, which the relation and repetition of these and other circumstances had made, had given him, I believe, considerable pain. His friends too had urged some explanation as necessary. But how shortsighted are they who do wrong! By coming forward in this imprudent manner, he fixed the stain only the more indelibly on himself; for he thus imposed upon me the cruel necessity of being examined against him; and this necessity was the more afflicting to me, because I was to be called upon, not to state facts relative to the trade, but to destroy his char-

acter as an evidence in its support. I was to be called upon, in fact, to explain all those communications, which have been stated to have taken place between us on this subject. Glad indeed should I have been to have declined this painful interference. But no one would hear of a refusal. The bishop of London, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Wilberforce, considered my appearance on this occasion as an imperious duty to the cause of the oppressed. It may be perhaps sufficient to say, that I was examined ; that Mr. Norris was present all the time ; that I was cross-examined by counsel ; and that after this time Mr. Norris seemed to have no ordinary sense of his own degradation ; for he never afterwards held up his head, or looked the abolitionists in the face, or acted with energy as a delegate, as on former occasions.

The hearing of evidence continued to go on in behalf of the abolition of the trade. No less than twenty-four witnesses, altogether, were heard in this session. And here it may not be improper to remark, that during the examination of our own witnesses as well as the cross-examination of those of our opponents, no council were ever employed. Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. William Smith undertook this laborious department ; and as they performed it with great ability, so they did it with great liberality towards those, who were obliged to come under their notice in the course of this fiery ordeal.

The session was now near its close ; and we had the sorrow to find, that the tide ran decidedly against us, upon the general question, in the house of commons. The same statements, which had struck so many members with panic

in the former sessions, such as that of emancipation, of the ruin and massacre of the planters, and of indemnification to the amount of seventy millions, had been industriously kept up, and this by a personal canvass among them. But this hostile disposition was still unfortunately increased by considerations of another sort. For the witnesses of our opponents had taken their ground first. No less than eleven of them had been examined in the last sessions. In the present, two-thirds of the time had been occupied by others on the same side. Hence the impression upon this ground also was against us; and we had yet had no adequate opportunity of doing it away. A clamour was also raised, where we thought it least likely to have originated. They (the planters) it was said, had produced persons in elevated life, and of the highest character as witnesses; whereas we had been obliged to take up with those of the lowest condition. This idea was circulated directly after the introduction of Isaac Parker, before mentioned; a simple mariner; and who was now contrasted with the admirals on the other side of the question. This outcry was not only ungenerous, but unconstitutional. It is the glory of the English law, that it has no scale of veracity, which it adapts to persons, according to the station, which they may be found to occupy in life. In our courts of law the poor are heard as well as the rich; and if their reputation be fair, and they stand proof against the cross-examination they undergo, both the judge and the jury must determine the matter in dispute by their evidence. But the house of commons were now called upon by our opponents, to adopt the pre-

posterior maxim of attaching falsehood to poverty, or of weighing truth by the standard of rank and riches.

But though we felt a considerable degree of pain, in finding this adverse disposition among so many members of the lower house, it was some consolation to us to know, that our cause had not suffered with their constituents, the people. These were still warmly with us. Indeed, their hatred of the trade had greatly increased.

One circumstance occurred to keep up a hatred of the trade among the people in this interval, which, trivial as it was, ought not to be forgotten. The amiable poet Cowper had frequently made the Slave-trade the subject of his contemplation. He had already severely condemned it in his valuable poem *The Task*. But now he had written three little fugitive pieces upon it. Of these the most impressive was that, which he called *The Negro's Complaint*, and of which the following is a copy :

“Fore’d from home and all its pleasures,  
 Afric’s coast I left forlorn,  
 To increase a stranger’s treasures,  
 O’er the raging billows borne;  
 Men from England bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold;  
 But, though theirs they have enroll’d me,  
 Minds are never to be sold.

“Still in thought as free as ever,  
 What are England’s rights, I ask,  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task?  
 Fleecy locks and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit Nature’s claim;  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in black and white the same.

" Why did all creating Nature  
 Make the plant, for which we toil ?  
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,  
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.  
 Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,  
 Lolling at your jovial boards,  
 Think, how many backs have smarted  
 For the sweets your cane affords.

" Is there, as you sometimes tell us,  
 Is there One, who rules on high ;  
 Has He bid you buy and sell us,  
 Speaking from his throne, the sky ?  
 Ask Him, if your knotted scourges,  
 Fetters, blood-extorting screws,  
 Are the means, which duty urges  
 Agents of His will to use ?

" Hark ! He answers. Wild tornadoes,  
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,  
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
 Are the voice with which He speaks.  
 He, foreseeing what vexations  
 Afric's sons should undergo,  
 Fix'd their tyrant's habitations  
 Where his whirlwinds answer....No.

" By our blood in Afric wasted,  
 Ere our necks receiv'd the chain ;  
 By the miseries, which we tasted  
 Crossing, in your barks, the main ;  
 By our sufferings, since you brought us  
 To the man degrading mart,  
 All sustain'd by patience, taught us  
 Only by a broken heart :

" Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
 Till some reason you shall find  
 Worthier of regard, and stronger,  
 Than the colour of our kind.  
 Slaves of gold ! whose sordid dealings  
 Tarnish all your boasted powers,  
 Prove that you have human feelings,  
 Ere you proudly question ours."

This little piece, Cowper presented in manuscript to some of his friends in London ; and these, conceiving it to contain a powerful ap-



peal in behalf of the injured Africans, joined in printing it. Having ordered it on the finest hot-pressed paper, and folded it up in a small and neat form, they gave it the printed title of "A Subject for Conversation at the Tea-table." After this, they sent many thousand copies of it in franks into the country. From one it spread to another, till it travelled almost over the whole island. Falling at length into the hands of the musician, it was set to music; and it then found its way into the streets, both of the metropolis and of the country, where it was sung as a ballad; and where it gave a plain account of the subject, with an appropriate feeling, to those who heard it.

Nor was the philanthropy of the late Mr. Wedgwood less instrumental in turning the popular feeling in our favour. He made his own manufactory contribute to this end. He took the seal of the committee, as exhibited in the first volume, for his model; and he produced a beautiful cameo, of a less size, of which the ground was a most delicate white, but the Negro, who was seen imploring compassion in the middle of it, was in his own native colour. Mr. Wedgwood made a liberal donation of these, when finished, among his friends. I received from him no less than five hundred of them myself. They, to whom they were sent, did not lay them up in their cabinets, but gave them away likewise. They were soon, like *The Negro's Complaint*, in different parts of the kingdom. Some had them inlaid in gold on the lid of their snuffboxes. Of the ladies several wore them in bracelets, and others had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for

their hair. At length, the taste for wearing them became general; and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity, and freedom.

The committee concluded their annual labours with a suitable report; in which they noticed the extraordinary efforts of our opponents to injure our cause, in the following manner: "In the progress of this business a powerful combination of interest has been excited against us. The African trader, the planter, and the West-India merchant have united their forces to defend the fortress, in which their supposed treasures lie. Vague calculations and false alarms have been thrown out to the public, in order to show, that the constitution and even the existence of this free and opulent nation depend on its depriving the inhabitants of a foreign country of those rights, and of that liberty, which we ourselves so highly and so justly prize. Surely in the nature of things and in the order of Providence it cannot be so. England existed as a great nation, long before the African commerce was known amongst us, and it is not to acts of injustice and violence that she owes her present rank in the scale of nations."

## CHAPTER III.

*Continuation from July 1790 to July 1791—  
Author travels again throughout the kingdom  
—Object of his journey—Motion in the House  
of Commons to resume the hearing of evidence  
in favour of the abolition—Machinations of  
interested persons, and cruel circumstances of  
the times previously to the day of decision—  
Motion at length made for stopping all further  
importation of Slaves from Africa—debates  
upon it—motion lost—Resolutions of the com-  
mittee for the Abolition of the Slave-trade—  
Establishment of the Sierra Leone Company.*

It was a matter of deep affliction to us to think, that the crimes and sufferings inseparable from the Slave-trade were to be continued to another year. And yet it was our duty, in the present moment, to acquiesce in the postponement of the question. This postponement was not now for the purpose of delay, but of securing victory. The evidence, on the side of the abolition, was, at the end of the last session, but half finished. It was impossible, for the sake of Africa, that we could have then closed it. No other opportunity might offer in parliament for establishing an indelible record in her favour, if we were to neglect the present. It was our duty therefore even to wait to complete it, and to procure such a body of evidence, as should not only bear us out in the approaching contest, but such as, if we were to fail, would bear out our successors also. It was possible indeed, if the inhabitants of our islands were to improve

in civilization, that the poor slaves might experience gradually an improved treatment with it; and so far testimony now might not be testimony for ever: but it was utterly impossible, while the Slave-trade lasted, and the human passions continued to be the same, that there should be any change for the better in Africa; or that any modes, less barbarous, should come into use for procuring slaves. Evidence therefore, if once collected on this subject, would be evidence for posterity. In the midst of these thoughts another journey occurred to me as necessary for this purpose; and I prayed, that I might have strength to perform it in the most effectual manner; and that I might be daily impressed, as I travelled along, with the stimulating thought, that the last hope for millions might possibly rest upon my own endeavours.

The committee highly approved of this journey. Mr. Wilberforce saw the absolute necessity of it also; and had prepared a number of questions, with great ingenuity, to be put to such persons, as might have information to communicate. These I added to those in the tables, which have been already mentioned; and they made together a valuable collection on the subject.

This tour was the most vexatious of any I had yet undertaken; many still refused to come forward to be examined, and some on the most frivolous pretences; so that I was disgusted, as I journeyed on, to find how little men were disposed to make sacrifices for so great a cause. In one part of it I went over nearly two thousand miles, receiving repeated refusals. I had not secured one witness within this distance. This

was truly disheartening. I was subject to the whims and the caprice of those whom I solicited on these occasions.\* To these I was obliged to accommodate myself. When at Edinburgh, a person who could have given me material information, declined seeing me though he really wished well to the cause. When I had returned southward as far as York, he changed his mind; and he would then see me. I went back, that I might not lose him. When I arrived, he would give me only private information. Thus I travelled, backwards and forwards, four hundred miles to no purpose. At another place a circumstance almost similar happened, though with a different issue. I had been for two years writing about a person, whose testimony was important. I had passed once through the town, in which he lived; but he would not then see me. I passed through it now, but no entreaties of his friends could make him alter his resolution. He was a man highly respectable as to situation in life; but of considerable vanity. I said therefore to my friend, on leaving the town, you may tell him that I expect to be at Nottingham in a few days; and though it be a hundred and fifty miles distant, I will even come back to see him, if he will dine with me on my return. A letter from my friend announced to me, when at Nottingham, that his vanity had been so gratified by the thought of a person coming expressly to visit him from such a distance, that he would meet me according to my appointment. I went back. We dined together. He yielded to my request. I was now repaid; and I returned towards Not-

\* Ten or twelve of those, who were examined, much to their honour, came forward of their own accord.

tingham in the night. These circumstances I mention, and I feel it right to mention them, that the reader may be properly impressed with the great difficulties we found in collecting a body of evidence in comparison with our opponents. They ought never to be forgotten; for if with the testimony, picked up as it were under all these disadvantages, we carried our object against those, who had almost numberless witnesses to command, what must have been the merits of our cause! No person can indeed judge of the severe labour and trials in these journeys. In the present, I was out four months. I was almost over the whole island. I intersected it backwards and forwards both in the night and in the day. I travelled nearly seven thousand miles in this time, and I was able to count upon twenty new and willing evidences.

Having now accomplished my object, Mr. Wilberforce moved on the fourth of February in the house of commons, that a committee be appointed to examine further witnesses in behalf of the abolition of the Slave-trade. This motion was no sooner made, than Mr. Cawthorne rose, to our great surprise, to oppose it. He took upon himself to decide, that the house had heard evidence enough. This indecent motion was not without its advocates. Mr. Wilberforce set forth the injustice of this attempt; and proved, that out of eighty-one days, which had been given up to the hearing of evidence, the witnesses against the abolition had occupied no less than fifty-seven. He was strenuously supported by Mr. Burke, Mr. Martin, and other respectable members. At length, the debate ended in favour of

the original motion, and a committee was appointed accordingly.

The examinations began again on February the seventh, and continued till April the fifth, when they were finally closed. In this, as in the former session, Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. William Smith principally conducted them; and indeed it was necessary that they should have been present at these times; for it is perhaps difficult to conceive the illiberal manner, in which our witnesses were treated by those on the other side of the question. Men, who had left the trade upon principle, and who had come forward, against their apparent interest, to serve the cause of humanity, and justice, were looked upon as mercenaries and culprits, or as men of doubtful and suspicious character. They were browbeaten. Unhandsome questions were put to them. Some were kept for four days under examination. It was however highly to their honour, that they were found in no one instance to prevaricate, nor to waver as to the certainty of their facts.

But this treatment, hard as it was for them to bear, was indeed good for the cause; for, coming thus pure out of the fire, they occasioned their own testimony, when read, to bear stronger marks of truth than that of the generality of our opponents; nor was it less superiour, when weighed by other considerations. For the witnesses against the abolition were principally interested. They who were not, had been hospitably received at the planters' tables. The evidence too, which they delivered, was almost wholly negative. They had not seen such and such evils. But this was no proof that the evils did not exist. The witnesses, on the other hand, who

came up in favour of the abolition, had no advantage in making their several assertions. In some instances they came up against their apparent interest ; and to my knowledge suffered persecution for so doing. The evidence also, which they delivered, was of a positive nature. They gave an account of specific evils, which had come under their own eyes. These evils were never disproved. They stood therefore on a firm basis, as on a tablet of brass. Engraved there in affirmative characters, a few of them were of more value, than all the negative and airy testimony, which had been advanced on the other side of the question.

The evidence having been delivered on both sides, and then printed, it was judged expedient by Mr. Wilberforce, seeing that it filled three folio volumes, to abridge it. This abridgement was made by the different friends of the cause. That no misrepresentation of any person's testimony might be made, Matthew Montagu, Esquire, and the Honourable E. J. Elliott, members of parliament, undertook to compare the abridged manuscripts with the original text, and to strike out or correct whatever they thought to be erroneous, and to insert whatever they thought to have been omitted. The committee, for the abolition, when the work was finished, printed it at their own expense. Mr. Wilberforce then presented it to the house of commons, as a faithful abridgement of the whole evidence. Having been received as such under the guarantee of Mr. Montagu and Mr. Elliot, the committee sent it to every individual member of that house.

The book having been thus presented, and a day fixed for the final determination of the ques-



tion, our feelings became almost insupportable: for we had the mortification to find, that our cause was going down in estimation, where it was then most important that it should have increased in favour. Our opponents had taken advantage of the long delay, which the examination of evidence had occasioned, to prejudice the minds of many of the members of the house of commons against us. The old arguments of emancipation, massacre, ruin, and indemnification, had been kept up; but, as the day of final decision approached, they had been increased. Such was our situation at this moment; when the current was turned still more powerful against us by the peculiar circumstances of the times. It was indeed the misfortune of this great cause to be assailed by every weapon, which could be turned against it. At this time Thomas Paine had published his *Rights of Man*. This had been widely circulated. At this time also the French revolution had existed nearly two years. The people of England had seen, during this interval, a government as it were dissected. They had seen an old constitution taken down, and a new one put up, piece by piece, in its stead. The revolution, therefore, in conjunction with the book in question, had had the effect of producing dissatisfaction among thousands; and this dissatisfaction was growing, so as to alarm a great number of persons of property in the kingdom, as well as the government itself. Now will it be believed that our opponents had the injustice to lay hold of these circumstances, at this critical moment, to give a death blow to the cause of the abolition? They represented the committee, though it had existed before the French

revolution or the Rights of Man were heard of, as a nest of Jacobins; and they held up the cause, sacred as it was, and though it had the support of the minister, as affording an opportunity of meeting for the purpose of overthrowing the State. Their cry succeeded. The very book of the abridgement of the evidence was considered by many members as poisonous as that of the Rights of Man. It was too profane for many of them to touch; and they who discarded it discarded the cause also.

But these were not the only circumstances which were used as means, at this critical moment, to defeat us. News of the revolution, which had commenced in St. Domingo in consequence of the disputes between the whites and the people of colour, had, long before this, arrived in England. The horrible scenes which accompanied it, had been frequently published as so many arguments against our cause. In January new insurrections were announced as having happened in Martinique. The Negroes there were described as armed, and the planters as having abandoned their estates for fear of massacre. Early in the month of March, insurrections in the smaller French islands were reported. Every effort was then made to represent these as the effects of the new principles of liberty, and of the cry for abolition. But what should happen, just at this moment, to increase the clamour against us? Nothing less than an insurrection in Dominica. Yes! An insurrection in a British island. This was the very event for our opponents. "All the predictions of the planters had now become verified. The horrible massacres were now realizing at home." To

give this news still greater effect, a meeting of our opponents was held at the London tavern. By a letter read there it appeared, that "the ruin of Dominica was now at hand." Resolutions were voted, and a memorial presented to government, "immediately to dispatch such a military force to the different islands, as might preserve the whites from destruction, and keep the Negroes in subjection during the present critical state of the slave-bill." This alarm was kept up till the seventh of April, when another meeting took place to receive the answer of government to the memorial. It was there resolved, that, as it was too late to send troops to the islands, the best way of preserving them would be to bring the question of the Slave-trade to an immediate issue; and that it was the duty of the government, if they regarded the safety of the islands, to oppose the abolition of it. Accounts of all these proceedings were inserted in the public papers. It is needless to say that they were injurious to our cause. Many looked upon the abolitionists as monsters. They became also terrified themselves. The idea with these was, that unless the discussion on this subject was terminated, all would be lost. Thus, under a combination of effects arising from the publication of the Rights of Man, the rise and progress of the French revolution, and the insurrections of the Negroes in the different islands, no one of which events had any thing to do with the abolition of the Slave-trade, the current was turned against us; and in this unfavourable frame of mind many members of parliament went into the house, on the day fixed for the discussion, to

discharge their duty with respect to this great question.

On the eighteenth of April, Mr. Wilberforce made his motion. He began by expressing a hope, that the present debate, instead of exciting asperity and confirming prejudice, would tend to produce a general conviction of the truth of what in fact was incontrovertible; that the abolition of the Slave-trade was indispensably required of them, not only by morality and religion, but by sound policy. He stated that he should argue the matter from evidence. He adverted to the character, situation, and means of information of his own witnesses; and having divided his subject into parts, the first of which related to the manner of reducing the natives of Africa to a state of slavery, he handled it in the following manner.

He would begin, he said, with the first boundary of the trade. Captain Wilson and captain Hills, of his Majesty's navy, and Mr. Dalrymple of the land service, had concurred in stating, that in the country contiguous to the river Senegal, when slave-ships arrived there, armed parties were regularly sent out in the evening, who scoured the country, and brought in their prey. The wretched victims were to be seen in the morning bound back to back in the huts on shore, whence they were conveyed, tied hand and foot, to the slave-ships. The design of these ravages was obvious, because, when the Slave-trade was stopped, they ceased. Mr. Kiernan spoke of the constant depredations by the Moors to procure slaves. Mr. Wadstrom confirmed them. The latter gentleman showed also that they were excited by presents of brandy, gun-

powder, and such other incentives; and that they were not only carried on by one community against another; but that the kings were stimulated to practice them, in their own territories, and on their own subjects: and in one instance a chieftain, who, when intoxicated, could not resist the demands of the slave-merchants, had expressed, in a moment of reason, a due sense of his own crime, and had reproached his christian seducers. Abundant also were the instances of private rapine. Individuals were kidnapped, whilst in their fields and gardens. There was an universal feeling of distrust and apprehension there. The natives never went any distance from home without arms; and when Captain Wilson asked them the reason of it, they pointed to a slave-ship then lying within sight.

On the windward coast, it appeared from Lieutenant Story and Mr. Bowman, that the evils just mentioned existed, if possible, in a still higher degree. They had seen the remains of villages which had been burnt, whilst the fields of corn were still standing beside them, and every other trace of recent desolation. Here an agent was sent to establish a settlement in the country, and to send to the ships such slaves as he might obtain. The orders he received from his Captain were, that "he was to encourage the chieftains by brandy and gunpowder to go to war, to make slaves." This he did. The chieftains performed their part in return. The neighbouring villages were surrounded and set on fire in the night. The inhabitants were seized when making their escape; and, being brought to the agent, were by him forwarded to his principal on the coast. Mr. How, a botanist in the service

of government, stated, that on the arrival of an order for slaves from Cape Coast Castle, while he was there, a native chief immediately sent forth armed parties, who brought in a supply of all descriptions in the night.

All these atrocities, he said, were fully substantiated by the evidence; and here he should do injustice to his cause, if he were not to make a quotation from the speech of Mr. B. Edwards in the assembly of Jamaica, who, though he was hostile to his propositions, had yet the candour to deliver himself in the following manner there. "I am persuaded," says he, "that Mr. Wilberforce has been rightly informed as to the manner in which slaves are generally procured. The intelligence I have collected from my own Negroes abundantly confirms his account; and I have not the smallest doubt, that in Africa the effects of this trade are precisely such as he has represented them. The whole, or the greatest part, of that immense continent is a field of warfare and desolation; a wilderness, in which the inhabitants are wolves towards each other. That this scene of oppression, fraud, treachery, and bloodshed, if not originally occasioned, is in part (I will not say wholly) upheld by the Slave-trade, I dare not dispute. Every man in the Sugar Islands may be convinced that it is so, who will inquire of any African Negroes, on their first arrival, concerning the circumstances of their captivity. The assertion that it is otherwise, is mockery and insult."

It was another effect of this trade, that it corrupted the morals of those, who carried it on. Every fraud was used to deceive the ignorance of the natives by false weights and measures,

adulterated commodities, and other impositions of a like sort. These frauds were even acknowledged by many, who had themselves practised them in obedience to the orders of their superiors. For the honour of the mercantile character of the country, such a traffic ought immediately to be suppressed.

With respect to the miseries of the Middle Passage, he had said so much on a former occasion, that he would spare the feelings of the committee as much as he could. He would therefore simply state that the evidence, which was before them, confirmed all those scenes of wretchedness, which he had then described; the same suffering from a state of suffocation by being crowded together; the same dancing in fetters; the same melancholy singing; the same eating by compulsion; the same despair; the same insanity; and all the other abominations which characterised the trade. New instances however had occurred, where these wretched men had resolved on death to terminate their woes. Some had destroyed themselves by refusing sustenance, in spite of threats and punishments. Others had thrown themselves into the sea; and more than one, when in the act of drowning, were seen to wave their hands in triumph, "exulting" (to use the words of an eyewitness) "that they had escaped." Yet these and similar things, when viewed through the African medium he had mentioned, took a different shape and colour. Captain Knox, an adverse witness, had maintained, that slaves lay during the night in tolerable comfort. And yet he confessed that in a vessel of one hundred and twenty tons, in which he had carried two hun-

dred and ninety slaves, the latter had not all of them room to lie on their backs. How comfortably then must they have lain in his subsequent voyages ! for he carried afterwards in a vessel of one hundred and eight tons four hundred and fifty, and in a vessel of one hundred and fifty tons, no less than six hundred slaves. Another instance of African deception was to be found in the testimony of Captain Frazer, one of the most humane Captains in the trade. It had been said of him that he had held hot coals to the mouth of a slave, to compel him to eat.

But upon whom did the cruelties, thus arising out of the prosecution of this barbarous traffic, fall ? Upon a people with feeling and intellect like ourselves. One witness had spoken of the acuteness of their understandings ; another of the extent of their memories ; a third of their genius for commerce ; a fourth of their proficiency in manufactures at home. Many had admired their gentle and peaceable disposition ; their cheerfulness ; and their hospitality. Even they, who were nominally slaves in Africa, lived a happy life. A witness against the abolitionist had described them as sitting and eating with their masters in the true style of patriarchal simplicity and comfort. Were these then a people incapable of civilization ? The argument that they were an inferiour species had been proved to be false.

Mr. Wilberforce, after showing in a very lucid manner, and by incontestable arguments, that the abolition of the trade in question, instead of being an injury would be a real and lasting benefit to the West-India islands, concluded by declaring that, interested as he might be supposed



to be in the final event of the question, he was comparatively indifferent as to the present decision of the house upon it. Whatever they might do, the people of Great-Britain, he was confident, would abolish the Slave-trade when, as would soon happen, its injustice and cruelty should be fairly laid before them. It was a nest of serpents, which would never have existed so long, but for the darkness in which they lay hid. The light of day would now be let in on them, and they would vanish from the sight. For himself, he declared he was engaged in a work, which he would never abandon. The consciousness of the justice of his cause would carry him forward, though he were alone; but he could not but derive encouragement from considering with whom he was associated. Let us not, he said, despair. It is a blessed cause; and success, ere long, will crown our exertions. Already we have gained one victory. We have obtained for these poor creatures the recognition of their human nature,\* which for a while, was most shamefully denied them. This is the first fruit of our efforts. Let us persevere, and our triumph will be complete. Never, never, will we desist, till we have wiped away this scandal from the christian name; till we have released ourselves from the load of guilt under which we at present labour; and till we have extinguished every trace of this bloody traffic, which our posterity, looking back to the history of these enlightened times, will scarcely believe had been suffered to exist so long, a disgrace and a dishonour to our country.

\* This point was actually obtained by the evidence before the house of commons; for, after this, we heard no more of them as an inferiour race.

He then moved, that the chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent the further importation of slaves into the British colonies in the West-Indies.

Colonel Tarleton immediately rose up, and began by giving an historical account of the trade from the reign of Elizabeth to the present time. He then proceeded to the sanction, which parliament had always given it. Hence it could not then be withdrawn without a breach of faith. Hence, also, the private property embarked in it was sacred : nor could it be invaded, unless an adequate compensation were given in return.

They, who had attempted the abolition of the trade, were led away by a mistaken humanity. The Africans themselves had no objection to its continuance.

With respect to the middle passage, he believed the mortality there to be on an average only five in the hundred ; whereas in regiments, sent out to the West-Indies, the average loss in the year was about ten and a half per cent.

The Slave-trade was absolutely necessary, if we meant to carry on our West-India commerce ; for many attempts had been made to cultivate the lands in the different islands by white labourers ; but they had always failed.

It had also the merit of keeping up a number of seamen in readiness for the state. Lord Rodney had stated this as one of its advantages on the breaking out of a war. Liverpool alone could supply nine hundred and ninety-three seamen annually.

He would now advert to the connexions dependent upon the African trade. It was the duty of the house to protect the planters, whose lives

had been, and were then exposed to imminent dangers, and whose property had undergone an unmerited depreciation, and to what could this depreciation, and to what could the late insurrection at Dominica be imputed, which had been saved from horrid carnage and midnight-butchery only by the adventitious arrival of two British regiments? They could only be attributed to the long delayed question of the abolition of the Slave-trade; and if this question were to go much longer unsettled, Jamaica would be endangered also.

To members of landed property he would observe, that the abolition would lessen the commerce of the country, and increase the national debt and the number of their taxes. The minister, he hoped, who patronized this wild scheme, had some new pecuniary resource in store to supply the deficiencies it would occasion.

Mr. Grosvenor then rose. He complimented the humanity of Mr. Wilberforce, though he differed from him on the subject of his motion. He himself had read only the privy council report; and he wished for no other evidence. The question had then been delayed two years. Had the abolition been so clear a point as it was said to be, it could not have needed either so much evidence or time.

He had heard a good deal about kidnapping and other barbarous practices. He was sorry for them. But these were the natural consequences of the laws of Africa; and it became us as wise men to turn them to our own advantage. The Slave-trade was certainly not an amiable trade. Neither was that of a butcher; but yet it was a very necessary one.

There was great reason to doubt the propriety of the present motion. He had twenty reasons for disapproving it. The first was, that the thing was impossible. He needed not therefore to give the rest. Parliament, indeed, might relinquish the trade. But to whom? To foreigners, who would continue it, and without the humane regulations, which were applied to it by his countrymen.

He would give advice to the house on this subject in the words, which the late Alderman Beckford used on a different occasion: "Meddle not with troubled waters: they will be found to be bitter waters, and the waters of affliction." He again admitted, that the Slave-trade was not an amiable trade; but he would not gratify his humanity at the expense of the interests of his country; and he thought we should not too curiously inquire into the unpleasant circumstances, which attended it.

Mr. James Martin succeeded Mr. Grosvenor. He said, he had been long aware, how much self-interest could pervert the judgement; but he was not apprised of the full power of it, till the Slave-trade became a subject of discussion. He had always conceived, that the custom of trafficking in human beings had been incautiously begun, and without any reflection upon it; for he never could believe that any man, under the influence of moral principles, could suffer himself knowingly to carry on a trade replete with fraud, cruelty, and destruction; with destruction, indeed, of the worst kind, because it subjected the sufferers to a lingering death. But he found now, that even such a trade as this could be sanctioned.

It was well observed in the petition from the University of Cambridge against the Slave-trade, "that a firm belief in the Providence of a benevolent Creator assured them that no system, founded on the oppression of one part of mankind, could be beneficial to another." He felt much concern, that in an assembly of the representatives of a country, boasting itself zealous not only for the preservation of its own liberties, but for the general rights of mankind, it should be necessary to say a single word upon such a subject; but the deceitfulness of the human heart was such, as to change the appearances of truth, when it stood in opposition to self-interest. And he had to lament that even among those, whose public duty it was to cling to the universal and eternal principles of truth, justice, and humanity, there were found some, who could defend that which was unjust, fraudulent, and cruel.

The doctrines he had heard that evening, ought to have been reserved for times the most flagrantly profligate and abandoned. He never expected then to learn, that the everlasting laws of righteousness were to give way to imaginary, political, and commercial expediency; and that thousands of our fellow-creatures were to be reduced to wretchedness, that individuals might enjoy opulence, or government a revenue.

This motion, he said, came strongly recommended to them. The honourable member, who introduced it, was justly esteemed for his character. He was the representative too of a noble county, which had been always ready to take the lead in every public measure for the good of the community, or for the general benefit of man-

kind ; of a county too, which had had the honour of producing a Saville. Had his illustrious predecessor been alive, he would have shown the same zeal on the same occasion. The preservation of the unalienable rights of all his fellow-creatures was one of the chief characteristics of that excellent citizen. Let every member in that house imitate him in the purity of their conduct and in the universal rectitude of their measures, and they would pay the same tender regard to the rights of other countries as to those of their own ; and, for his part, he should never believe those persons to be sincere, who were loud in their professions of love of liberty, if he saw that love confined to the narrow circle of one community, which ought to be extended to the natural rights of every inhabitant of the globe.

But we should be better able to bring ourselves up to this standard of rectitude, if we were to put ourselves into the situation of those, whom we oppressed. This was the rule of our religion. What should we think of those, who should say, that it was their interest to injure us ? But he hoped we should not deceive ourselves so grossly as to imagine, that it was our real interest to oppress any one. The advantages to be obtained by tyranny were imaginary, and deceitful to the tyrant ; and the evils they caused to the oppressed were grievous, and often insupportable.

Before he sat down, he would apologize, if he had expressed himself too warmly on this subject. He did not mean to offend any one. There were persons connected with the trade, some of whom he pitied on account of the diffi-

culty of their situation. But he should think most contemptibly of himself as a man, if he could talk on this traffic without emotion. It would be a sign to him of his own moral degradation. He regretted his inability to do justice to such a cause ; but if, in having attempted to forward it, he had shown the weakness of his powers, he must console himself with the consideration, that he felt more solid comfort in having acted up to sound public principles, than he could have done from the exertion of the most splendid talents against the conviction of his conscience.

Mr. Francis instanced an overseer, who, having thrown a Negro into a copper of boiling cane-juice for a trifling offence, was punished merely by the loss of his place, and by being obliged to pay the value of the slave. He stated another instance of a girl of fourteen, who was dreadfully whipped for coming too late to her work. She fell down motionless after it ; and was then dragged along the ground, by the legs, to an hospital ; where she died. The murderer, though tried, was acquitted by a jury of his peers, upon the idea, that it was impossible a master could destroy his own property. This was a notorious fact. It was published in the Jamaica Gazette ; and it had even happened since the question of the abolition had been started.

Mr. Fox said, that he would not believe that there could be found in the house of commons men of such hard hearts and inaccessible understandings, as to vote an assent to the continuance of this detestable trade, and then go home to their families, satisfied with their vote, after

they had been once made acquainted with the subject.

Mr. Matthew Montagu rose, and said a few words in support of the motion; and after condemning the trade in the strongest manner, he declared, that as long as he had life, he would use every faculty of his body and mind in endeavouring to promote its abolition.

Lord John Russel succeeded Mr. Montagu. He said, that although slavery was repugnant to his feelings, he must vote against the abolition, as visionary and delusive. It was a feeble attempt without the power to serve the cause of humanity. Other nations would take up the trade. Whenever a bill of wise regulation should be brought forward, no man would be more ready than himself to lend his support. In this way the rights of humanity might be asserted without injury to others. He hoped he should not incur censure by his vote; for, let his understanding be what it might, he did not know that he had, notwithstanding the assertions of Mr. Fox, an inaccessible heart.

Mr. William Smith remarked, that the slaves were exposed to great misery in the islands, was true as well from inference as from facts: for what might not be expected from the use of arbitrary power, where the three characters of party, judge, and executioner were united! The slaves too were more capable on account of their passions, than the beasts of the field, of exciting the passions of their tyrants. To what a length the ill treatment of them might be carried, might be learnt from the instance which general Tottenham mentioned to have seen in the year 1780 in the streets of Bridge Town, Barbadoes: "A



youth about nineteen (to use his own words in the evidence) entirely naked, with an iron collar about his neck, having five long projecting spikes. His body both before and behind was covered with wounds. His belly and thighs were almost cut to pieces, with running ulcers all over them; and a finger might have been laid in some of the weals. He could not sit down, because his hinder part was mortified; and it was impossible for him to lie down, on account of the prongs of his collar." He supplicated the general for relief. The latter asked, who had punished him so dreadfully? The youth answered, his master had done it. And because he could not work, this same master, in the same spirit of perversion, which extorts from scripture a justification of the Slave-trade, had fulfilled the apostolic maxim, that he should have nothing to eat. The use he meant to make of this instance was to show the unprotected state of the slaves. What must it be, where such an instance could pass not only unpunished, but almost unregarded! If, in the streets of London, but a dog were to be seen lacerated like this miserable man, how would the cruelty of the wretch be execrated, who had thus even abused a brute!

The judicial punishments also inflicted upon the Negro showed the low estimation, in which, in consequence of the strength of old customs and deep rooted prejudices, they were held. Mr. Edwards, in his speech to the assembly at Jamaica, stated the following case, as one which had happened in one of the rebellions there. Some slaves surrounded the dwellinghouse of their mistress. She was in bed with a lovely infant. They deliberated upon the means of put-

ting her to death in torment. But in the end one of them reserved her for his mistress; and they killed her infant with an axe before her face. "Now," says Mr. Edwards, (addressing himself to his audience,) "you will think that no torments were too great for such horrible excesses. Nevertheless I am of a different opinion. I think that death, unaccompanied with cruelty, should be the utmost exertion of human authority over our unhappy fellow-creatures." Torments, however, were always inflicted in these cases. The punishment was gibbeting alive, and exposing the delinquents to perish by the gradual effects of hunger, thirst, and a parching sun; in which situation they were known to suffer for nine days, with a fortitude scarcely credible, never uttering a single groan. But horrible as the excesses might have been, which occasioned these punishments, it must be remembered, that they were committed by ignorant savages, who had been dragged from all they held most dear; whose patience had been exhausted by a cruel and loathsome confinement during their transportation; and whose resentment had been wound up to the highest pitch of fury by the lash of the driver.

But he would now mention another instance, by way of contrast, out of the evidence. A child on board a slave-ship, of about ten months old, took sulk and would not eat. The captain flogged it with a cat; swearing that he would make it eat, or kill it. From this and other ill treatment the child's legs swelled. He then ordered some water to be made hot to abate the swelling. But even his tender mercies were cruel; for the cook, on putting his hand into the

water, said it was too hot. Upon this the captain swore at him, and ordered the feet to be put in. This was done. The nails and skin came off. Oiled cloths were then put round them. The child was at length tied to a heavy log. Two or three days afterwards, the captain caught it up again; and repeated that he would make it eat, or kill it. He immediately flogged it again, and in a quarter of an hour it died. But, after the child was dead, whom should the barbarian select to throw it overboard, but the wretched mother? In vain she started from the office. He beat her, till he made her take up the child and carry it to the side of the vessel. She then dropped it into the sea, turning her head the other way that she might not see it.

Now it would naturally be asked, Was not this captain also gibbeted alive? Alas! although the execrable barbarity of the European exceeded that of the Africans before mentioned, almost as much as his opportunities of instruction had been greater than theirs, no notice whatsoever was taken of this horrible action; and a thousand similar cruelties had been committed in this abominable trade with equal impunity: but he would say no more. He should vote for the abolition, not only as it would do away all the evils complained of in Africa and the middle passage; but as it would be the most effectual means of ameliorating the condition of those unhappy persons, who were still to continue slaves in the British colonies.

Mr. Courtenay entreated every member to recollect, that on his vote that night depended the happiness of millions; and that it was then in his power to promote a measure, of which

the benefits would be felt over one whole quarter of the globe ; that the seeds of civilization might, by the present bill, be sown all over Africa ; and the first principles of humanity be established in regions, where they had hitherto been excluded by the existence of this execrable trade.

Mr. Pitt rose, and said, that from the first hour of his having had the honour to sit in parliament down to the present, among all the questions, whether political or personal, in which it had been his fortune to take a share, there had never been one in which his heart was so deeply interested as in the present ; both on account of the serious principles it involved, and the consequences connected with it.

The present was not a mere question of feeling. The argument, which ought in his opinion to determine the committee, was, that the Slave-trade was unjust. It was therefore such a trade as it was impossible for him to support, unless it could be first proved to him, that there were no laws of morality binding upon nations ; and that it was not the duty of a legislature to restrain its subjects from invading the happiness of other countries, and from violating the fundamental principles of justice.

Several had stated the impracticability of the measure before them. They wished to see the trade abolished ; but there was some necessity for continuing in it, which they conceived to exist. Nay, almost every one, he believed, appeared to wish, that the further importation of slaves might cease ; provided it could be made out, that the population of the West-Indies could be maintained without it. He proposed

therefore to consider the latter point; for, as the impracticability of keeping up the population there appeared to operate as the chief objection, he trusted that, by showing it to be ill founded, he should clear away all other obstacles whatever; so that, having no ground either of justice or necessity to stand upon, there could be no excuse left to the committee for resisting the present motion.

He might reasonably, however, hope that they would not reckon any small or temporary disadvantage, which might arise from the abolition, to be a sufficient reason against it. It was surely not any slight degree of expediency, nor any small balance of profit, nor any light shades of probability on the one side, rather than on the other, which would determine them on this question. He asked pardon even for the supposition. The Slave-trade was an evil of such magnitude, that there must be a common wish in the committee at once to put an end to it, if there were no great and serious obstacles. It was a trade, by which multitudes of unoffending nations were deprived of the blessings of civilization, and had their peace and happiness invaded. It ought therefore to be no common expediency, it ought to be nothing less than the utter ruin of our islands, which it became those to plead, who took upon them to defend the continuance of it.

He could not help thinking that the West-India gentlemen had manifested an over great degree of sensibility as to the point in question; and that their alarms had been unreasonably excited upon it. He had examined the subject carefully for himself; and he would now detail those reasons, which had induced him firmly to believe,

not only that no permanent mischief would follow from the abolition; but not even any such temporary inconvenience, as could be stated to be a reason for preventing the house from agreeing to the motion before them; on the contrary, that the abolition itself would lay the foundation for the more solid improvement of all the various interests of those colonies.

In doing this he should apply his observations chiefly to Jamaica, which contained more than half the slaves in the British West-Indies; and if he should succeed in proving that no material detriment could arise to the population there, this would afford so strong a presumption with respect to the other islands, that the house could no longer hesitate, whether they should, or should not, put a stop to this most horrid trade.

In the twenty years ending in 1788, the annual loss of slaves in Jamaica, (that is, the excess of deaths above the births,) appeared to be one in the hundred. In a preceding period the loss was greater; and, in a period before that, greater still; there having been a continual gradation in the decrease through the whole time. It might fairly be concluded, therefore, that (the average loss of the last period being one per cent.) the loss in the former part of it would be somewhat more, and in the latter part somewhat less, than one per cent. insomuch that it might be fairly questioned, whether, by this time, the births and deaths in Jamaica might not be stated as nearly equal. It was to be added, that a peculiar calamity, which swept away fifteen thousand slaves, had occasioned a part of the mortality in the last mentioned period. The probable

loss, therefore, now to be expected was very inconsiderable indeed.

There was, however, one circumstance to be added, which the West-India gentlemen, in stating this matter, had entirely overlooked; and which was so material, as clearly to reduce the probable diminution in the population of Jamaica down to nothing. In all the calculations he had referred to of the comparative number of births and deaths, all the Negroes in the island were included. The newly imported, who died in the seasoning, made a part. But these swelled, most materially, the number of the deaths. Now as these extraordinary deaths would cease, as soon as the importations ceased, a deduction of them ought to be made from his present calculation.

But the number of those, who thus died in the seasoning, would make up of itself nearly the whole of that one per cent. which had been stated. He particularly pressed an attention to this circumstance; for the complaint of being likely to want hands in Jamaica, arose from the mistake of including the present unnatural deaths, caused by the seasoning, among the natural and perpetual causes of mortality. These deaths, being erroneously taken into the calculations, gave the planters an idea, that the numbers could not be kept up. These deaths, which were caused merely by the Slave-trade, furnished the very ground, therefore, on which the continuance of that trade had been thought necessary.

The evidence as to this point was clear; for it would be found in that dreadful catalogue of deaths, arising from the seasoning and the pas-

sage, which the house had been condemned to look into, that one half died. An annual mortality of two thousand slaves in Jamaica might be therefore charged to the importation; which, compared with the whole number on the island, hardly fell short of the whole one per cent. decrease.

Joining this with all the other considerations, he would then ask, could the decrease of the slaves in Jamaica be such; could the colonies be so destitute of means; could the planters, when by their own accounts they were establishing daily new regulations for the benefit of the slaves; could they, under all these circumstances, be permitted to plead that total impossibility of keeping up their number, which they had rested on, as being indeed the only possible pretext for allowing fresh importations from Africa? He appealed therefore to the sober judgement of all, whether the situation of Jamaica was such, as to justify a hesitation in agreeing to the present motion.

It might be observed also, that, when the importations should stop, that disproportion between the sexes, which was one of the obstacles to population, would gradually diminish; and a natural order of things be established. Through the want of this natural order a thousand grievances were created, which it was impossible to define; and which it was in vain to think that, under such circumstances, we could cure. But the abolition of itself would work this desirable effect. The West-Indians would then feel a near and urgent interest to enter into a thousand little details, which it was impossible for him to describe, but which would have the greatest in-



fluence on population. A foundation would thus be laid for the general welfare of the islands; a new system would rise up, the reverse of the old; and eventually both their general wealth and happiness would increase.

He had now proved far more than he was bound to do; for, if he could only show that the abolition would not be ruinous, it would be enough. He could give up, therefore, three arguments out of four, through the whole of what he had said, and yet have enough left for his position. As to the Creoles, they would undoubtedly increase. They differed in this entirely from the imported slaves, who were both a burthen and a curse to themselves and others. The measure now proposed would operate like a charm; and, besides stopping all the miseries in Africa and the passage, would produce even more benefit in the West-Indies than legal regulations could effect.

He would now just touch upon the question of emancipation. A rash emancipation of the slaves would be mischievous. In that unhappy situation, to which our baneful conduct had brought ourselves and them, it would be no justice on either side to give them liberty. They were as yet incapable of it; but their situation might be gradually amended. They might be relieved from every thing harsh and severe; raised from their present degraded state; and put under the protection of the law. Till then, to talk of emancipation was insanity. But it was the system of fresh importations, which interfered with these principles of improvement; and it was only the abolition which could establish them. The suggestion had its foundation in hu-

man nature. Wherever the incentive of honour, credit, and fair profit appeared, energy would spring up ; and when these labourers should have the natural springs of human action afforded them, they would then rise to the natural level of human industry.

From Jamaica he would now go to the other islands. In Barbadoes the slaves had rather increased. In St. Kitts the decrease for fourteen years had been but three fourths per cent. but here many of the observations would apply, which he had used in the case of Jamaica. In Antigua many had died by a particular calamity. But for this, the decrease would have been trifling. In Nevis and Montserrat there was little or no disproportion of the sexes ; so that it might well be hoped, that the numbers would be kept up in these islands. In Dominica some controversy had arisen about the calculation ; but Governour Orde had stated an increase of births above the deaths. From Grenada and St. Vincents no accurate accounts had been delivered in answer to the queries sent them ; but they were probably not in circumstances less favourable than in the other islands.

On a full review, then, of the state of the Negro population in the West-Indies, was there any serious ground of alarm from the abolition of the Slave-trade ? Where was the impracticability, on which alone so many had rested their objections ? Must we not blush at pretending, that it would distress our consciences to accede to this measure, as far as the question of the Negro population was concerned ?

Intolerable were the mischiefs of this trade, both in its origin and through every stage of its

progress. To say that slaves could be furnished us by fair and commercial means was ridiculous. The trade sometimes ceased, as during the late war. The demand was more or less according to circumstances. But how was it possible, that to a demand so exceedingly fluctuating the supply should always exactly accommodate itself? Alas! we made human beings the subject of commerce; we talked of them as such; and yet we would not allow them the common principle of commerce, that the supply must accommodate itself to the consumption. It was not from wars, then, that the slaves were chiefly procured. They were obtained in proportion as they were wanted. If a demand for slaves arose, a supply was forced in one way or other; and it was in vain, overpowered as we then were with positive evidence, as well as the reasonableness of the supposition, to deny that by the Slave-trade we occasioned all the enormities which had been alleged against it.

Mr. Fox again rose and observed, that some expressions, which he had used, had been complained of as too harsh and severe. He had since considered them; but he could not prevail upon himself to retract them; because, if any gentleman, after reading the evidence on the table, and attending to the debate, could avow himself an abettor of this shameful traffic in human flesh, it could only be either from some hardness of heart, or some difficulty of understanding, which he really knew not how to account for.

Some had considered this question as a question of political, whereas it was a question of personal, freedom. Political freedom was un-

doubtedly a great blessing; but, when it came to be compared with personal, it sunk to nothing. To confound the two, served therefore to render all arguments on either, perplexing and unintelligible. Personal freedom was the first right of every human being. It was a right, of which he who deprived a fellow-creature was absolutely criminal in so depriving him, and which he who withheld was no less criminal in withholding. He could not therefore retract his words with respect to any, who (whatever regard he might otherwise have for them) should, by their vote of that night, deprive their fellow-creatures of so great a blessing. Nay, he would go further. He would say, that if the house, knowing what the trade was by the evidence, did not by their vote mark to all mankind their abhorrence of a practice so savage, so enormous, so repugnant to all laws human and divine, they would consign their character to eternal infamy.

That the pretence of danger to our West-Indian islands from the abolition of the Slave-trade was totally unfounded, Mr. Wilberforce had abundantly proved: but if there were those, who had not been satisfied with that proof, was it possible to resist the arguments of Mr. Pitt on the same subject? It had been shown, on a comparison of the births and deaths in Jamaica, that there was not now any decrease of the slaves. But if there had been, it would have made no difference to him in his vote; for, had the mortality been ever so great there, he should have ascribed it to the system of importing Negroes, instead of that of encouraging their natural increase. Was it not evident, that the planters thought it more convenient to buy them fit for

work, than to breed them ? Why, then, was this horrid trade to be kept up ? To give the planters, truly, the liberty of misusing their slaves, so as to check population : for it was from ill usage only that, in a climate so natural to them, their numbers could diminish. The very ground, therefore, on which the planters rested the necessity of fresh importations, namely, the destruction of lives in the West-Indies, was itself the strongest argument that could be given, and furnished the most imperious call upon parliament for the abolition of the trade.

Against this trade innumerable were the charges. An honourable member, Mr. Smith, had done well to introduce those tragical stories, which had made such an impression upon the house. No one of these had been yet controverted. It had indeed been said, that the cruelty of the African captain to the child was too bad to be true ; and we had been desired to look at the cross-examination of the witness, as if we should find traces of the falsehood of his testimony there. But his cross-examination was peculiarly honourable to his character ; for after he had been pressed, in the closest manner, by some able members of the house, the only inconsistency they could fix upon him was, whether the fact had happened on the same day of the same month of the year 1764 or the year 1765.

But it was idle to talk of the incredibility of such instances. It was not denied, that absolute power was exercised by the slave-captains ; and if this was granted, all the cruelties charged upon them would naturally follow. Never did he hear of charges so black and horrible as those contained in the evidence on the table. They

unfolded such a scene of cruelty, that if the house, with all their present knowledge of the circumstances, should dare to vote for its continuance, they must have nerves, of which he had no conception. We might find instances indeed, in history, of men violating the feelings of nature on extraordinary occasions. Fathers had sacrificed their sons and daughters, and husbands their wives; but to imitate their characters we ought to have not only nerves as strong as the two Brutuses, but to take care that we had a cause as good; or that we had motives for such a dereliction of our feelings as patriotic as those, which historians had annexed to these when they handed them to the notice of the world.

But what was our motive in the case before us, to continue a trade which was a wholesale sacrifice of a whole order and race of our fellow-creatures? which carried them away by force from their native country, in order to subject them to the mere will and caprice, the tyranny and oppression, of other human beings, for their whole natural lives, them and their posterity for ever!! O most monstrous wickedness! O unparalleled barbarity! And, what was more aggravating, this most complicated scene of robbery and murder which mankind had ever witnessed, had been honoured by the name of... trade.

That a number of human beings should be at all times ready to be furnished as fair articles of commerce, just as our occasions might require, was absurd. The argument of Mr. Pitt on this head was unanswerable. Our demand was fluctuating: it entirely ceased at some times: at

others it was great and pressing. How was it possible, on every sudden call, to furnish a sufficient return in slaves, without resorting to those execrable means of obtaining them, which were stated in the evidence? These were of three sorts, and he would now examine them.

Captives in war, it was urged, were consigned either to death or slavery. This, however, he believed to be false in point of fact. But suppose it were true; did it not become us, with whom it was a custom, founded in the wisest policy, to pay the captives a peculiar respect and civility, to inculcate the same principles in Africa? But we were so far from doing this, that we encouraged wars for the sake of taking, not men's goods and possessions, but men themselves; and it was not the war which was the cause of the Slave-trade, but the Slave-trade which was the cause of the war. It was the practice of the slave-merchants to try to intoxicate the African kings in order to turn them to their purpose. A particular instance occurred in the evidence, of a prince, who, when sober, resisted their wishes; but in the moment of inebriety he gave the word for war, attacked the next village, and sold the inhabitants to the merchants.

The second mode was kidnapping. He referred the house to various instances of this in the evidence: but there was one in particular, from which we might immediately infer the frequency of the practice. A black trader had kidnapped a girl and sold her; but he was presently afterwards kidnapped and sold himself; and, when he asked the captain who bought him, "What! do you buy me, who am a great

trader?" the only answer was, "Yes, I will buy you, or her, or any body else, provided any one will sell you;" and accordingly both the trader and the girl were carried to the West-Indies and sold for slaves.

The third mode of obtaining slaves was by crimes committed or imputed. One of these was adultery. But was Africa the place, where Englishmen, above all others, were to go to find out and punish adulterers? Did it become us to cast the first stone? It was a most extraordinary pilgrimage for a most extraordinary purpose! And yet upon this plea we justified our right of carrying off its inhabitants. The offence alleged next was witchcraft. What a reproach it was to lend ourselves to this superstition! Yes: we stood by; we heard the trial; we knew the crime to be impossible; and that the accused must be innocent: but we waited in patient silence for his condemnation; and then we lent our friendly aid to the police of the country, by buying the wretched convict, with all his family whom, for the benefit of Africa, we carried away also into perpetual slavery.

Of the slaves in the West-Indies it had been said, that they were taken from a worse state to a better. An honourable member, Mr. William Smith, had quoted some instances out of the evidence to the contrary. He also would quote one or two others. A slave under hard usage had run away. To prevent a repetition of the offence his owner sent for his surgeon, and desired him to cut off the man's leg. The surgeon refused. The owner, to render it a matter of duty in the surgeon, broke it. "Now," says he, "you must cut it off; or the man will die."



We might console ourselves, perhaps, that this happened in a French island; but he would select another instance, which had happened in one of our own. Mr. Ross heard the shrieks of a female issuing from an out house; and so piercing, that he determined to see what was going on. On looking in he perceived a young female tied up to a beam by her wrists; entirely naked; and in the act of involuntary writhing and swinging; while the author of her torture was standing below her with a lighted torch in his hand, which he applied to all the parts of her body as it approached him. What crime this miserable woman had perpetrated he knew not; but the human mind could not conceive a crime warranting such a punishment.

He was glad to see that these tales affected the house. Would they then sanction enormities, the bare recital of which made them shudder? Let them remember that humanity did not consist in a squeamish ear. It did not consist in shrinking and starting at such tales as these; but in a disposition of the heart to remedy the evils they unfolded. Humanity belonged rather to the mind than to the nerves. But, if so, it should prompt men to charitable exertion. Such exertion was necessary in the present case. It was necessary for the credit of our jurisprudence at home, and our character abroad. For what would any man think of our justice, who should see another hanged for a crime, which would be innocence itself, if compared with those enormities, which were allowed in Africa and the West-Indies under the sanction of the British parliament.

With respect to the intellect and sensibility of

the Africans, it was pride only, which suggested a difference between them and ourselves. There was a remarkable instance to the point in the evidence, and which he would quote. In one of the slave-ships was a person of consequence ; a man, once high in a military station, and with a mind not insensible to the eminence of his rank. He had been taken captive and sold ; and was then in the hold, confined promiscuously with the rest. Happening in the night to fall asleep, he dreamed that he was in his own country ; high in honour and command ; carressed by his family and friends ; waited on by his domestics ; and surrounded with all his former comforts in life. But awaking suddenly, and finding where he was, he was heard to burst into the loudest groans and lamentations on the miserable contrast of his present state ; mixed with the meanest of his subjects ; and subjected to the insolence of wretches a thousand times lower than himself in every kind of endowment. He appealed to the house, whether this was not as moving a picture of the miserable effects of the Slave-trade, as could be well imagined. There was one way, by which they might judge of it. Let them make the case their own. This was the Christian rule of judging ; and, having mentioned Christianity, he was sorry to find that any should suppose, that it had given countenance to such a system of oppression. So far was this from being the case, that he thought it one of the most splendid triumphs of this religion, that it had caused slavery to be so generally abolished on its appearance in the world. It had done this by teaching us, among other beautiful precepts, that, in the sight of their Maker, all mankind were equal. Its

influence appeared to have been more powerful in this respect than that of all the ancient systems of philosophy ; though even in these, in point of theory, we might trace great liberality and consideration for human rights. Where could be found finer sentiments of liberty than in Demosthenes and Cicero ? Where bolder assertions of the rights of mankind, than in Tacitus and Thucydides ? But, alas ! these were the holders of slaves ! It was not so with those who had been converted to Christianity.

He would now conclude by declaring that the whole country, indeed the whole civilized world, must rejoice that such a bill as the present had been moved for, not merely as a matter of humanity, but as an act of justice ; for he would put humanity out of the case. Could it be called humanity to forbear from committing murder ? Exactly upon this ground did the present motion stand ; being strictly a question of national justice. He thanked Mr. Wilberforce for having pledged himself so strongly to pursue his object till it was accomplished ; and, as for himself, he declared, that, in whatever situation he might ever be, he would use his warmest efforts for the promotion of this righteous cause.

Mr. Stanley, (the member for Lancashire,) rose, and declared that, when he came into the house, he intended to vote against the abolition ; but that the impression made both on his feelings and on his understanding was such, that he could not persist in his resolution. He was now convinced that the entire abolition of the Slave-trade was called for equally by sound policy and justice. He thought it right and fair to avow manfully this change in his opinion. The abolition,

he was sure, could not long fail of being carried. The arguments for it were irresistible.

The Honourable Mr. Ryder said, that he came to the house, not exactly in the same circumstances as Mr. Stanley, but very undecided on the subject. He was, however, so strongly convinced by the arguments he had heard, that he was become equally earnest for the abolition.

Mr. Smith, (member for Pontefract,) said, that he should not trouble the house at so late an hour, further than to enter his protest, in the most solemn manner, against this trade, which he considered as most disgraceful to the country, and contrary to all the principles of justice and religion.

Mr. Burke said he would use but few words. He declared that he had for a long time had his mind drawn towards this great subject. He had even prepared a bill for the regulation of the trade, conceiving at that time that the immediate abolition of it was a thing hardly to be hoped for; but when he found that Mr. Wilberforce had seriously undertaken the work, and that his motion was for the abolition, which he approved much more than his own, he had burnt his papers; and made an offering of them in honour of his nobler proposition, much in the same manner as we read, that the curious books were offered up and burnt at the approach of the Gospel. He highly applauded the confessions of Mr. Stanley and Mr. Ryder. It would be a glorious tale for them to tell their constituents, that it was impossible for them, however prejudiced, if sent to hear discussion in that house, to avoid surrendering up their hearts and judgements at the shrine of reason.

Mr. Wilberforce made a short reply to some arguments in the course of the debate; after which, at half past three in the morning, the house divided. There appeared for Mr. Wilberforce's motion eighty-eight, and against it one hundred and sixty-three; so that it was lost by a majority of seventy-five votes.

By this unfavourable division the great contest, in which we had been so long engaged, was decided. We were obliged to give way to superior numbers. Our fall, however, grievous as it was, was rendered more tolerable by the circumstance of having been prepared to expect it. It was rendered more tolerable also by other considerations; for we had the pleasure of knowing, that we had several of the most distinguished characters in the kingdom, and almost all the splendid talents of the house of commons, in our favour. We knew too, that the question had not been carried against us either by evidence or by argument; but that we were the victims of the accidents and circumstances of the times. And as these considerations comforted us, when we looked forward to future operations on this great question, so we found great consolation as to the past, in believing, that, unless human constitutions were stronger than they really were, we could not have done more than we had done towards the furtherance of the cause.

The committee for the abolition held a meeting soon after this our defeat. It was the most impressive I ever attended. The looks of all bespoke the feelings of their hearts. Little was said previously to the opening of the business; and, after it was opened, it was conducted with a kind of solemn dignity, which became the oc-

casion. The committee, in the course of its deliberations, came to the following resolutions :

That the thanks of this committee be respectfully given to the illustrious minority of the house of commons, who lately stood forth the asserters of British justice and humanity, and the enemies of a traffic in the blood of man.

That our acknowledgements are particularly due to William Wilberforce, Esquire, for his unwearied exertions to remove this opprobrium of our national character ; and to the right honourable William Pitt, and the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, for their virtuous and dignified cooperation in the same cause.

That the solemn declarations of these gentlemen, and of Matthew Montagu and William Smith, Esquires, that they will not relinquish, but with life, their struggle for the abolition of the Slave-trade, are not only highly honourable to themselves as Britons, as Statesmen, and as Christians, but must eventually, as the light of evidence shall be more and more diffused, be seconded by the good wishes of every man not immediately interested in that continuance of that detestable commerce.

And, lastly, that anticipating the opposition they should have to sustain from persons trained to a familiarity with the rapine and desolation necessarily attendant on the Slave-trade, and sensible also of the prejudices which implicitly arise from long established usages, this committee consider the late decision in the house of commons as a delay, rather than a defeat. In addressing a free and enlightened nation on a subject, in which its justice, its humanity, and its wisdom are involved, they cannot despair of

final success; and they do hereby, under an increasing conviction of the excellence of their cause, and in conformity to the distinguished examples before them, renew their firm protestation, that they will never desist from appealing to their countrymen, till the commercial intercourse with Africa shall cease to be polluted with the blood of its inhabitants.

These resolutions were published, and they were followed by a suitable report.

At length the session ended; and though, in the course of it, the afflicting loss of the general question had occurred, there was yet an attempt made by the abolitionists in parliament, which met with a better fate. The Sierra Leone company received the sanction of the legislature. The object of this institution was to colonize a small portion of the coast of Africa. They, who were to settle there, were to have no concern in the Slave-trade, but to discourage it as much as possible. They were to endeavour to establish a new species of commerce, and to promote cultivation in its neighbourhood by free labour. The persons more generally fixed upon for colonists, were such Negroes, with their wives and families, as chose to abandon their habitations in Nova-Scotia. These had followed the British arms in America; and had been settled there, as a reward for their services, by the British government. My brother, just mentioned to have been chosen a member of the committee, and who had essentially served the great cause of the abolition on many occasions, undertook a visit to Nova-Scotia, to see if those in question were willing to undergo the change; and in that case to provide transports, and con-

duct them to Sierra Leone. This object he accomplished. He embarked more than eleven hundred persons in fifteen vessels, of all which he took the command. On landing them he became the first Governour of the new colony. Having laid the foundation of it, he returned to England; when a successor was appointed. From that time many unexpected circumstances, but particularly devastations by the French in the beginning of the war, took place, which contributed to ruin the trading company, which was attached to it. It is pleasing, however, to reflect, that though the object of the institution, as far as mercantile profit was concerned, thus failed, the other objects belonging to it were promoted. Schools, places of worship, agriculture, and the habits of civilized life, were established. Sierra Leone, therefore, now presents itself as the medium of civilization for Africa. And, in this latter point of view, it is worth all the treasure which has been lost in supporting it: for the Slave-trade, which was the great obstacle to this civilization, being now happily abolished, there is a metropolis, consisting of some hundreds of persons, from which may issue the seeds of reformation to this injured continent; and which, when sown, may be expected to grow into fruit without interruption. New schools may be transplanted from thence into the interior. Teachers, and travellers on discovery, may be sent from thence in various directions; who may return to it occasionally as to their homes. The natives too, able now to travel in safety, may resort to it from various parts. They may see the improvements which are going on from time to time. They may send their children to it for



education. And thus it may become the medium\* of a great intercourse between England and Africa, to the benefit of each other.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*Continuation from July 1791 to July 1792—Author travels round the kingdom again—Object of his journey—People begin to leave off the use of sugar—to form committees—and to send petitions to Parliament—Motion made in the House of Commons for the immediate abolition of the trade—Debates upon it—Abolition resolved upon, but not to commence till 1796—Resolution taken to the lords—Latter determine upon hearing evidence—Evidence at length introduced—Further hearing of it postponed to the next session.*

THE defeat which we had just sustained, was a matter of great triumph to our opponents. When they considered the majority in the house of commons in their favour, they viewed the resolutions of the committee, which have been detailed, as the last spiteful effort of a vanquished and dying animal, and they supposed that they had consigned the question to eternal sleep. The committee, however, were too deeply attached to the cause, vanquished as they were, to desert it; and they knew also too well the barometer of

\*To promote this desirable end an association took place last year, called The African Institution, under the patronage of the Duke of Gloucester, as president, and of the friends to the African cause, particularly of such as were in parliament, and as belonged to the committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade.

public feeling, and the occasion of its fluctuations, to despair. In the year 1787 the members of the house of commons, as well as the people, were enthusiastic in behalf of the abolition of the trade. In the year 1788 the fair enthusiasm of the former began to fade. In 1789 it died. In 1790 prejudice started up as a noxious weed in its place. In 1791 this prejudice arrived at its growth. But to what were these changes owing? To delay; during which the mind, having been gradually led to the question as a commercial, had been gradually taken from it as a moral object. But it was possible to restore the mind to its proper place. Add to which, that the nation had never deserted the cause during this whole period.

It is much to the honour of the English people, that they should have continued to feel for the existence of an evil which was so far removed from their sight. But at this moment their feelings began to be insupportable. Many of them resolved, as soon as parliament had rejected the bill, to abstain from the use of West-Indian produce. In this state of things a pamphlet, written by William Bell Crafton, of Tewksbury, and called "A Sketch of the Evidence, with a Recommendation on the Subject to the serious Attention of People in general," made its appearance; and another followed it, written by William Fox, of London, "On the Propriety of abstaining from West-India Sugar and Rum." These pamphlets took the same ground. They inculcated abstinence from these articles as a moral duty; they inculcated it as a peaceable and constitutional measure; and they laid before the reader a truth, which was sufficiently obvious,

that if each      ld abstain, the people would have a complete remedy for this enormous evil in their own power.

While these things were going on, it devolved upon me to arrange all the evidence on the part of the abolition under proper heads, and to abridge it into one volume. It was intended that a copy of this should be sent into different towns of the kingdom, that all might know, if possible, the horrors, (as far as the evidence contained them,) of this execrable trade; and as it was possible that these copies might lie in the places where they were sent, without a due attention to their contents, I resolved, with the approbation of the committee, to take a journey, and for no other purpose than personally to recommend that they might be read.

The books, having been printed, were dispatched before me. Of this tour I shall give the reader no other account than that of the progress of the remedy, which the people were then taking into their own hands. And first I may observe, that there was no town, through which I passed, in which there was not some one individual who had left off the use of sugar. In the smaller towns there were from ten to fifty by estimation, and in the larger from two to five hundred, who had made this sacrifice to virtue. These were of all ranks and parties. Rich and poor, churchmen and dissenters, had adopted the measure. Even grocers had left off trading in the article, in some places. In gentlemen's families, where the master had set the example, the servants had often voluntarily followed it; and even children, who were capable of understanding the history of the sufferings of the Africans,

excluded, with the most virtuous resolution, the sweets, to which they had been accustomed, from their lips. By the best computation I was able to make from notes taken down in my journey, no fewer than three hundred thousand persons had abandoned the use of sugar.

Having travelled over Wales, and two thirds of England, I found it would be impossible to visit Scotland on the same errand. I had already, by moving upwards and downwards in parallel lines, and by intersecting these in the same manner, passed over six thousand miles. By the best calculation I could make, I had yet two thousand to perform. By means of almost incessant journeyings night and day, I had suffered much in my health. My strength was failing daily. I wrote therefore to the committee on this subject; and they communicated immediately with Dr. Dickson, who, on being applied to, visited Scotland in my stead. He consulted first with the committee at Edinburgh relative to the circulation of the abridgement of the evidence. He then pursued his journey, and, in conjunction with the unwearied efforts of Mr. Campbel Haliburton, rendered essential service to the cause for this part of the kingdom.

Of the enthusiasm of the nation at this time none can form an opinion but they who witnessed it. There never was perhaps a season when so much virtuous feeling pervaded all ranks. Great pains were taken by interested persons in many places to prevent public meetings. But no efforts could avail. The current ran with such strength and rapidity, that it was impossible to stem it. In the city of London a remarkable instance occurred. The livery had been long

waiting for the common council to begin a petition. But the lord mayor and several of the aldermen stifled it. The former, indignant at this conduct, insisted upon a common hall. A day was appointed; and though the notice given of it was short, the assemblage was greater than had ever been remembered on any former occasion. Scarcely a liveryman was absent, unless sick, or previously engaged. The petition, when introduced, was opposed by those who had prevented it in the common council. But their voices were drowned amidst groans and hissings. It was shortly after carried; and it had not been signed more than half an hour, before it was within the walls of the house of commons. The reason of this extraordinary dispatch was, that it had been kept back by intrigue so late, that the very hour, in which it was delivered to the house, was that in which Mr. Wilberforce was to make his new motion.

And as no petitions were ever more respectable than those presented on this occasion, as far as they breathed the voice of the people, and as far as they were founded on a knowledge of the object which they solicited, so none were ever more numerous, as far as we have any record of such transactions. Not fewer than three hundred and ten were presented from England; one hundred and eighty-seven from Scotland; and twenty from Wales. Two other petitions also for the abolition came from England, but they were too late for delivery. On the other side of the question, one was presented from the town of Reading for regulation, in opposition to that for abolition from the same place. There were also four against abolition.

On the second of April, Mr. Wilberforce moved the order of the day; which having been agreed to, Sir William Dolben was put into the chair.

Mr. Wilberforce again opened the debate in a luminous and impressive speech. After remarking at considerable length upon the evils and the injuries of the Slave-trade, he touched upon the argument, so often repeated, that other nations would carry on the Slave-trade, if we abandoned it. But how did we know this? Had not Denmark given a noble example to the contrary? She had consented to abolish the trade in ten years; and had she not done this, even though we, after an investigation for nearly five years, had ourselves hung back? But what might not be expected, if we were to take up the cause in earnest; if we were to proclaim to all nations the injustice of the trade, and to solicit their concurrence in the abolition of it! He hoped the representatives of the nation would not be less just than the people. The latter had stepped forward, and expressed their sense more generally by petitions, than in any instance in which they had ever before interfered. To see this great cause thus triumphing over distinctions and prejudices was a noble spectacle. Whatever might be said of our political divisions, such a sight had taught us, that there were subjects still beyond the reach of party; that there was a point of elevation, where we ascended above the jarring of the discordant elements, which ruffled and agitated the vale below. In our ordinary atmosphere clouds and vapours obscured the air, and we were the sport of a thousand conflicting winds and adverse currents; but here we moved

in a higher region, where all was pure and clear, and free from perturbation and discomposure.

“As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm ;  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Here then, on this august eminence, he hoped we should build the temple of benevolence ; that we should lay its foundation deep in truth and justice ; and that we should inscribe upon its gates, “Peace and good will to men.” Here we should offer the first fruits of our benevolence, and endeavour to compensate, if possible, for the injuries we had brought upon our fellow-men.

He would only observe, that his conviction of the indispensable necessity of immediately abolishing this trade remained as strong as ever. Let those who talked of allowing three or four years to the continuance of it, reflect on the disgraceful scenes which had passed last year. As for himself, he would wash his hands of the blood which would be spilled in this horrid interval. He could not, however, but believe, that the hour was come, when we should put a final period to the existence of this cruel traffic. Should he unhappily be mistaken, he would never desert the cause ; but to the last moment of his life he would exert his utmost powers in its support. He would now move, “That it is the opinion of this committee, that the trade carried on by British subjects for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be abolished.”

Mr. Bailie was in hopes that the friends of the abolition would have been contented with the

innocent blood which had been already shed. The great island of St. Domingo had been torn to pieces by insurrections. The most dreadful barbarities had been perpetrated there. In the year 1789 the imports into it exceeded five millions sterling. The exports from it in the same year amounted to six millions; and the trade employed three hundred thousand tons of shipping, and thirty thousand seamen. This fine island, thus advantageously situated, had been lost in consequence of the agitation of the question of the Slave-trade. Surely, so much mischief ought to have satisfied those who supported it; but they required the total destruction of all the West-Indian colonies, belonging to Great-Britain, to complete the ruin.

The honourable gentleman, who had just spoken, had dwelt upon the enormities of the Slave-trade. He was far from denying, that many acts of inhumanity might accompany it; but as human nature was much the same every where, it would be unreasonable to expect among African traders, or the inhabitants of our islands, a degree of perfection in morals, which was not to be found in Great-Britain itself. Would any man estimate the character of the English nation by what was to be read in the records of the Old Bailey? He himself, however, had lived sixteen years in the West-Indies, and he could bear testimony to the general good usage of the slaves.

Before the agitation of this impolitic question the slaves were contented with their situation. There was a mutual confidence between them and their masters: and this continued to be the case till the new doctrines were broached. But



now depots of arms were necessary on every estate ; and the scene was totally reversed. Nor was their religious then inferiour to their civil state. When the English took possession of Grenada, where his property lay, they found them baptized and instructed in the principles of the Roman Catholic faith. The priests of that persuasion had indeed been indefatigable in their vocation ; so that imported Africans generally obtained within twelve months a tolerable idea of their religious duties. He had seen the slaves there go through the public mass in a manner, and with a fervency, which would have done credit to more civilized societies. But the case was now altered ; for, except where the Moravians had been, there was no trace in our islands of an attention to their religious interests.

It had been said, that their punishments were severe. There might be instances of cruelty ; but these were not general. Many of them were undoubtedly ill disposed ; though not more, according to their number, on a plantation, than in a regiment, or in a ship's crew. Had we never heard of seamen being flogged from ship to ship, or of soldiers dying in the very act of punishment ? Had we not also heard, even in this country of boasted liberty, of seamen being seized, and carried away, when returning from distant voyages, after an absence of many years ; and this without even being allowed to see their wives and families ? As to distressed objects, he maintained, that there was more wretchedness and poverty in St. Gile's, than in all the West-Indian islands belonging to Great-Britain.

He would now speak of the African and West-

Indian trades. The imports and exports of these amounted to upwards of ten millions annually; and they gave employment to three hundred thousand tons of shipping, and to about twenty-five thousand seamen. These trades had been sanctioned by our ancestors in parliament. The acts for this purpose might be classed under three heads. First, they were such as declared the colonies and the trade thereof advantageous to Great-Britain, and therefore entitled to her protection. Secondly, such as authorized, protected, and encouraged the trade to Africa, as advantageous in itself, and necessary to the welfare and existence of the sugar colonies: and, Thirdly, such as promoted and secured loans of money to the proprietors of the said colonies, either from British subjects or from foreigners. These acts,\* he apprehended, ought to satisfy every person of the legality and usefulness of these trades. They were enacted in reigns distinguished for the production of great and enlightened characters. We heard then of no wild and destructive doctrines like the present. These were reserved for this age of novelty and innovation. But he must remind the house, that the inhabitants of our islands had as good a right to the protection of their property, as the inhabitants of Great-Britain. Nor could it be diminished in any shape without full compensation. The proprietors of lands in the ceded islands, which were purchased of government under specific conditions of settlement, ought to be indemnified. They also, (of whom he was one,) who had purchased the territory granted by the crown to General Monkton in the

\* Here he quoted them specifically.

island of St. Vincent, ought to be indemnified also. The sale of this had gone on briskly, till it was known, that a plan was in agitation for the abolition of the Slave-trade. Since that period the original purchasers had done little or nothing, and they had many hundred acres on hand, which would be of no value, if the present question was carried. In fact, they had a right to compensation. The planters generally spent their estates in this country. They generally educated their children in it. They had never been found seditious or rebellious; and they demanded of the Parliament of Great-Britain that protection, which, upon the principles of good faith, it was in duty bound to afford them in common with the rest of his majesty's loyal subjects.

Mr. Henry Thornton remarked, that the manner of procuring slaves in Africa was the great evil to be remedied. Africa was to be stripped of its inhabitants to supply a population for the West-Indies. There was a Dutch proverb, which said, "My son, get money, honestly if you can; but get money:" or, in other words, "Get slaves, honestly if you can; but get slaves." This was the real grievance; and the two honourable gentlemen, by confining their observations to the West-Indies, had entirely overlooked it.

Though this evil had been fully proved, he could not avoid stating to the house some new facts, which had come to his knowledge as a director of the Sierra Leone company, and which would still further establish it. The consideration, that they had taken place since the discussion of the last year on this subject, obliged him to relate them.

Mr. Falconbridge, agent to the company, sitting one evening in Sierra Leone, heard a shout, and immediately afterwards the report of a gun. Fearing an attack, he armed forty of the settlers, and rushed with them to the place from whence the noise came. He found a poor wretch, who had been crossing from a neighbouring village, in the possession of a party of kidnappers, who were tying his hands. Mr. Falconbridge, however, dared not rescue him, lest, in the defenceless state of his own town, retaliation might be made upon him.

At another time a young woman, living half a mile off, was sold, without any criminal charge, to one of the slave-ships. She was well acquainted with the agent's wife, and had been with her only the day before. Her cries were heard; but it was impossible to relieve her.

At another time a young lad, one of the free settlers who went from England, was caught by a neighbouring chief, as he was straggling alone from home, and sold for a slave. The pretext was, that some one in the town of Sierra Leone had committed an offence. Hence the first person belonging to it, who could be seized, was to be punished. Happily the free settlers saw him in his chains; and they recovered him, before he was conveyed to the ship.

To mark still more forcibly the scenes of misery to which the Slave-trade gave birth, he would mention a case stated to him in a letter by king Naimbanna. It had happened to this respectable person, in no less than three instances, to have some branches of his family kidnapped, and carried off to the West-Indies. At one time three young men, Corpro, Banna, and Marbrour,

were decoyed on board a Danish slave-ship, under pretence of buying something, and were taken away. At another time another relation piloted a vessel down the river. He begged to be put on shore, when he came opposite to his own town; but he was pressed to pilot her to the river's mouth. The captain then pleaded the impracticability of putting him on shore; carried him to Jamaica; and sold him for a slave. Fortunately, however, by means of a letter, which was conveyed there, the man, by the assistance of the governour, was sent back to Sierra Leone. At another time another relation was also kidnapped. But he had not the good fortune, like the former, to return.

He would mention one other instance. A son had sold his own father, for whom he obtained a considerable price: for, as the father was rich in domestic slaves, it was not doubted that he would offer largely for his ransom. The old man accordingly gave twenty-two of these in exchange for himself. The rest, however, being from that time filled with apprehensions of being on some ground or other sold to the slave-ships, fled to the mountains of Sierra Leone, where they now dragged on a miserable existence. The son himself was sold, in his turn, soon after. In short, the whole of that unhappy peninsula, as he learnt from eyewitnesses, had been desolated by the trade in slaves. Towns were seen standing without inhabitants all over the coast; in several of which the agent of the company had been. There was nothing but distrust among the inhabitants. Everyone, if he stirred from home, felt himself obliged to be armed.

Such was the nature of the Slave-trade. It

had unfortunately obtained the name of a trade ; and many had been deceived by the appellation. But it was war, and not trade. It was a mass of crimes, and not commerce. It was that which prevented the introduction of a trade in Africa ; for it was only by clearing and cultivating the lands, that the climate could be made healthy for settlements ; but this wicked traffic, by dispersing the inhabitants, and causing the lands to remain uncultivated, made the coast unhealthy to Europeans. He had found, in attempting to establish a colony there, that it was an obstacle, which opposed itself to him in innumerable ways ; it created more embarrassments than all the natural impediments of the country ; and it was more hard to contend with, than any difficulties of climate, soil, or natural disposition of the people.

Colonel Tarleton repeated his arguments of the last year. In addition to these he inveighed bitterly against the abolitionists, as a junto of sectaries, sophists, enthusiasts, and fanatics. He condemned the abolition as useless, unless other nations would take it up. He brought to the recollection of the house the barbarous scenes which had taken place in St. Domingo, all of which, he said, had originated in the discussion of this question. He described the alarms, in which the inhabitants of our own islands were kept, lest similar scenes should occur from the same cause. He ridiculed the petitions on the table. Itinerant clergymen, mendicant physicians, and others had extorted signatures from the sick, the indigent, and the traveller. School-boys were invited to sign them, under the promise of a holiday. He had letters to produce,

which would prove all these things, though he was not authorized to give up the names of those who had written them.

Mr. Whitbread said, that even if he could conceive, that the trade was, as some had asserted it to be, founded on principles of humanity; that the Africans were rescued from death in their own country; that, upon being carried to the West-Indies, they were put under kind masters; that their labour there was easy; that at evening they returned cheerful to their homes; that in sickness they were attended with care; and that their old age was rendered comfortable; even then he would vote for the abolition of the Slave-trade; inasmuch as he was convinced, that that, which was fundamentally wrong, no practice could justify.

No eloquence could persuade him, that the Africans were torn from their country and their dearest connexions, merely that they might lead a happier life: or that they could be placed under the uncontrolled dominion of others without suffering. Arbitrary power would spoil the hearts of the best. Hence would arise tyranny on the one side, and a sense of injury on the other. Hence the passions would be let loose, and a state of perpetual enmity would follow.

He needed only to go to the accounts of those who defended the system of slavery, to show that it was cruel. He was forcibly struck last year by an expression of an honourable member, an advocate for the trade, who, when he came to speak of the slaves, on selling off the stock of a plantation, said, that they fetched less than the common price, because they were damaged. Damaged! what! were they goods and chattels?

What an idea was this to hold out of our fellow-creatures ! We might imagine how slaves were treated, if they could be spoken of in such a manner. Perhaps these unhappy people had lingered out the best part of their lives in the service of their master. Able then to do but little, they were sold for little ! and the remaining substance of their sinews was to be pressed out by another, yet more hardened than the former, who had made a calculation of their vitals accordingly.

Mr. Dundas, (now Lord Melville,) declared that he had always been a warm friend to the abolition of the Slave-trade, though he differed with Mr. Wilberforce as to the mode of effecting it.

The abolitionists, and those on the opposite side of the question, had, both of them, gone into extremes. The former were for the immediate and abrupt annihilation of the trade. The latter considered it as essentially necessary to the existence of the West-Indian islands, and therefore laid it down, that it was to be continued for ever. Such was the vast distance between the parties.

He would say, that he agreed with his honourable friend Mr. Wilberforce in very material points. He believed the trade was not founded in policy ; that the continuation of it was not essential to the preservation of our trade with the West-Indian islands ; and that the slaves were not only to be maintained, but increased there, by natural population. He agreed, too, as to the propriety of the abolition. But when his honourable friend talked of direct and abrupt abolition, he would submit it to him, whether he



did not run counter to the prejudices of those who were most deeply interested in the question; and whether, if he could obtain his object without wounding these, it would not be better to do it? Did he not also forget the sacred attention, which parliament had ever shown to the private interests and patrimonial rights of individuals?

Mr. Addington (the speaker) professed himself to be one of those moderate persons alluded to by Mr. Dundas. He wished to see some middle measure suggested. The fear of doing injury to the property of others, had hitherto prevented him from giving an opinion against the system, the continuance of which he could not countenance.

Mr. Fox said, that after what had fallen from the two last speakers he could remain no longer silent. Something so mischievous had come out, and something so like a foundation had been laid for preserving, not only for years to come, but for ever, this detestable traffic, that he should feel himself wanting in his duty, if he were not to deprecate all such deceptions and delusions upon the country.

The honourable gentlemen had called themselves moderate men: but upon this subject he neither felt, nor desired to feel, any thing like a sentiment of moderation. Their speeches had reminded him of a passage in Middleton's life of Cicero. The translation of it was defective, though it would equally suit his purpose. He says, "To enter into a man's house, and kill him, his wife, and family, in the night, is certainly a most heinous crime, and deserving of death; but to break open his house, to murder him, his wife, and all his children, in the night,

may be still very right, provided it be done with moderation." Now, was there any thing more absurd in this passage, than to say, that the Slave-trade might be carried on with moderation; for, if you could not rob or murder a single man with moderation, with what moderation could you pillage and wound a whole nation? In fact, the question of the abolition was simply a question of justice. It was only, whether we should authorize by law, respecting Africa, the commission of crimes for which, in this country, we should forfeit our lives; notwithstanding which, it was to be treated, in the opinion of these honourable gentlemen, with moderation.

Upon the whole, he would give his opinion of this traffic in a few words. He believed it to be impolitic; he knew it to be inhuman; he was certain it was unjust; he thought it so inhuman and unjust, that, if the colonies could not be cultivated without it, they ought not to be cultivated at all. It would be much better for us to be without them, than not to abolish the Slave-trade. He hoped therefore that members would this night act the part which would do them honour. He declared, that whether he should vote in a large minority or a small one, he would never give up the cause. Whether in the house of parliament or out of it, in whatever situation he might ever be, as long as he had a voice to speak, this question should never be at rest. Believing the trade to be of the nature of crimes and pollutions, which stained the honour of the country, he would never relax his efforts. It was his duty to prevent man from preying upon man; and if he and his friends should die before they had attained their glorious object, he hoped

there would never be wanting men alive to their duty, who would continue to labour till the evil should be wholly done away. If the situation of the Africans was as happy as servitude could make them, he could not consent to the enormous crime of selling man to man; nor permit a practice to continue, which put an entire bar to the civilization of one quarter of the globe. He was sure that the nation would not much longer allow the continuance of enormities which shocked human nature. The West-Indians had no right to demand that crimes should be permitted by this country for their advantage; and if they were wise, they would lend their cordial assistance to such measures, as would bring about in the shortest possible time, the abolition of this execrable trade.

Mr. Jenkinson, (now Lord Hawkesbury,) admitted that the Slave-trade was an evil. He admitted also, that the state of Slavery was an evil; and if the question was, not whether we should abolish, but whether we should establish these, he would be the first to oppose himself to their existence; but there were many evils, which we should have thought it our duty to prevent, yet which, when they had once arisen, it was more dangerous to oppose than to submit to. The duty of a statesman was, not to consider abstractedly what was right or wrong, but to weigh the consequences which were likely to result from the abolition of an evil, against those, which were likely to result from its continuance. Agreeing then most perfectly with the abolitionists in their end, he differed from them only in the means of accomplishing it. He was desirous of doing that gradually, which he conceived

they were doing rashly. He had therefore drawn up two propositions. The first, was, that an address be presented to his Majesty, that he would recommend to the colonial assemblies to grant premiums to such planters, and overseers, as should distinguish themselves by promoting the annual increase of the slaves by birth ; and likewise freedom to every female slave, who had reared five children to the age of seven years. The second was, that a bounty of five pounds per head be given to the master of every slave-ship, who should import in any cargo a greater number of females than males, not exceeding the age of twenty-five years. To bring forward these propositions, he would now move that the chairman leave the chair.

Mr. Pitt rejoiced that the debate had taken a turn, which contracted the question into such narrow limits. The matter then in dispute was merely as to the time at which the abolition should take place. He therefore congratulated the house, the country, and the world, that this great point had been gained ; that we might now consider this trade as having received its condemnation ; that this curse of mankind was seen, in its true light ; and that the greatest stigma on our national character, which ever yet existed, was about to be removed ! Mankind, he trusted, were now likely to be delivered from the greatest practical evil that ever afflicted the human race ; from the most severe and extensive calamity recorded in the history of the world.

Mr. Pitt proceeded to remark upon the civilization of Africa ; as his eye had just glanced upon a West-Indian law, in the evidence upon the table, he said he would begin with an argu-

ment, which the sight of it had suggested to him. This argument had been ably answered in the course of the evening ; but he would view it in yet another light. It had been said, that the savage disposition of the Africans rendered the prospect of their civilization almost hopeless. This argument was indeed of long standing ; but, last year, it had been supported upon a new ground. Captain Frazer had stated in his evidence, that a boy had been put to death at Cabenda, because there were those who refused to purchase him as a slave. This single story was deemed by him, and had been considered by others, as a sufficient proof of the barbarity of the Africans, and of the inutility of abolishing the Slave-trade. But they, who had used this fact, had suppressed several circumstances relating to it. It appeared, on questioning Captain Frazer afterward, that this boy had previously run away from his master three several times ; that the master had to pay his value, according to the custom of the country, every time he was brought back ; and that partly from anger at the boy for running away so frequently, and partly to prevent a repetition of the same expense, he determined to destroy him. Such was the explanation of the signal instance, which was to fix barbarity on all Africa, as it came out in the cross-examination of Captain Frazer. That this African master was unenlightened and barbarous, he freely admitted : but what would an enlightened and civilized West-Indian have done in a similar case ? He would quote the law, passed in the West-Indies in 1722, which he had just cast his eye upon in the book of evidence, by which law this very same crime of running

away was by the legislature of an island, by the grave and deliberate sentence of an enlightened legislature, punished with death; and this, not in the case only of the third offence, but even in the very first instance. It was enacted, "That, if any Negro or other slave should withdraw himself from his master for the term of six months; or any slave, who was absent, should not return within that time, every such person should suffer death." There was also another West-Indian law, by which every Negro was armed against his fellow-negro, for he was authorized to kill every runaway slave; and he had even a reward held out to him for so doing. Let the house now contrast the two cases. Let them ask themselves which of the two exhibited the greater barbarity; and whether they could possibly vote for the continuance of the Slave-trade, upon the principle, that the Africans had shown themselves to be a race of incorrigible barbarians?

Something like an opposite argument, but with a like view, had been maintained by others on this subject. It had been said, in justification of the trade, that the Africans had derived some little civilization from their intercourse with us. Yes: we had given them just enough of the forms of justice to enable them to add the pretext of legal trials to their other modes of perpetrating the most atrocious crimes. We had given them just enough of European improvements, to enable them the more effectually to turn Africa into a ravaged wilderness. Alas! alas! we had carried on a trade with them from this civilized and enlightened country, which, instead of diffusing knowledge, had been a check to every

laudable pursuit. We had carried a poison into their country, which spread its contagious effects from one end of it to the other, and which penetrated to its very centre, corrupting every part to which it reached. We had there subverted the whole order of nature; we had aggravated every natural barbarity, and furnished to every man motives for committing, under the name of trade, acts of perpetual hostility and perfidy against his neighbour. Thus had the perversion of British commerce carried misery instead of happiness to one whole quarter of the globe. False to the very principles of trade, misguided in our policy, unmindful of our duty, what almost irreparable mischief had we done to that continent! How should we hope to obtain forgiveness from Heaven, if we refused to use those means, which the mercy of Providence had still reserved to us for wiping away the guilt and shame, with which we were now covered? If we refused even this degree of compensation, how aggravated would be our guilt! Should we delay, then, to repair these incalculable injuries? We ought to count the days, nay the very hours, which intervened to delay the accomplishment of such a work.

On this great subject, the civilization of Africa, which, he confessed, was near his heart, he would yet add a few observations. And first he would say, that the present deplorable state of that country, especially when we reflected that her chief calamities were to be ascribed to us, called for our generous aid, rather than justified any despair, on our part, of her recovery, and still less a repetition of our injuries. On what ground of theory or history did we act, when we sup-

posed that she was never to be reclaimed? There was a time, which it might be now fit to call to remembrance, when human sacrifices, and even this very practice of the Slave-trade, existed in our own island. Slaves, as we may read in Henry's History of Great-Britain, were formerly an established article of our exports. "Great numbers," he says, "were exported, like cattle, from the British coast, and were to be seen exposed for sale in the Roman market." "Adultery, witchcraft, and debt," says the same historian, "were probably some of the chief sources of supplying the Roman market with British slaves; prisoners taken in war were added to the number; there might be also among them some unfortunate gamblers, who, after having lost all their goods, at length, staked themselves, their wives, and their children." Now every one of these sources of slavery had been stated to be at this hour a source of slavery in Africa. If these practices, therefore, were to be admitted as proofs of the natural incapacity of its inhabitants, why might they not have been applied to ancient Britain? Why might not then some Roman senator, pointing to British barbarians, have predicted with equal boldness, that these were a people, who were destined never to be free; who were without the understanding necessary for the attainment of useful arts; depressed by the hand of Nature below the level of the human species; and created to form a supply of slaves for the rest of the world? But happily, since that time, notwithstanding what would then have been the justness of these predictions, we had emerged from barbarism. We were now raised to a situation, which exhibited



a striking contrast to every circumstance, by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterized Africa. There was indeed one thing wanting to complete the contrast, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting even to this hour as barbarians; for we continued to this hour a barbarous traffic in slaves. We continued it ever yet, in spite of all our great pretensions. We were once as obscure among the nations of the earth, as savage in our manners, as debased in our morals, as degraded in our understandings, as these unhappy Africans. But in the lapse of a long series of years, by a progression slow, and for a time almost imperceptible, we had become rich in a variety of acquirements. We were favoured above measure in the gifts of Providence, we were unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and established in all the blessings of civil society: we were in the possession of peace, of liberty, and of happiness: we were under the guidance of a mild and a beneficent religion; and we were protected by impartial laws, and the purest administration of justice: we were living under a system of government, which our own happy experience led us to pronounce the best and wisest, and which had become the admiration of the world. From all these blessings we must for ever have been excluded, had there been any truth in those principles, which some had not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the case of Africa; and we should have been at this moment little superior, either in morals, knowledge, or refinement, to the rude inhabitants of that continent.

If then we felt that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance, would have been the greatest calamity which could have befallen us; if we viewed with gratitude the contrast between our present and our former situation; if we shuddered to think of the misery, which would still have overwhelmed us, had our country continued to the present times, through some cruel policy, to be the mart for slaves to the more civilized nations of the world; God forbid, that we should any longer subject Africa to the same dreadful scourge, and exclude that light of knowledge from her coasts, which had reached every other quarter of the globe!

He trusted we should no longer continue this commerce; and that we should no longer consider ourselves as conferring too great a boon on the natives of Africa in restoring them to the rank of human beings. He trusted we should not think ourselves too liberal, if, by abolishing the Slave-trade, we gave them the same common chance of civilization with other parts of the world. If we listened to the voice of reason and duty this night, some of us might live to see a reverse of that picture, from which we now turned our eyes with shame. We might live to behold the natives engaged in the calm occupations of industry, and in the pursuit of a just commerce. We might behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land, which at some happy period in still later times might blaze with full lustre; and joining their influence to that of pure religion, might illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. Then might we hope, that even Africa, (though last of

all the quarters of the globe,) should enjoy at length, in the evening of her days, those blessings, which had descended so plentifully upon us in a much earlier period of the world. Then also would Europe, participating in her improvement and prosperity, receive an ample recompense for the tardy kindness, (if kindness it could be called,) of no longer hindering her from extricating herself out of the darkness, which, in other more fortunate regions, had been so much more speedily dispelled.

It was in this view....it was as an atonement for our long and cruel injustice towards Africa, that the measure proposed by his honourable friend, Mr. Wilberforce, most forcibly recommended itself to his mind. The great and happy change to be expected in the state of her inhabitants was, of all the various benefits of the abolition, in his estimation the most extensive and important. He should vote against the adjournment; and he should also oppose every proposition, which tended either to prevent, or even to postpone for an hour, the total abolition of the Slave-trade.

Mr. Pitt having concluded his speech, (at about six in the morning,) Sir William Dolben, the chairman, proposed the following questions. The first was on the motion of Mr. Jenkinson, "that the chairman do now leave the chair." This was lost by a majority of two hundred and thirty-four to eighty-seven. The second was on the motion of Mr. Dundas, "that the abolition should be gradual;" when the votes for gradual exceeded those for immediate by one hundred and ninety-three to one hundred and twenty-five. He then put the amended question, that "it was

the opinion of the committee, that the trade ought to be gradually abolished." The committee having divided again, the votes for a gradual abolition were two hundred and thirty, and those against any abolition were eighty-five.

After this debate, the committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade held a meeting. They voted their thanks to Mr. Wilberforce for his motion, and to Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and those other members of the house, who had supported it. They resolved also, that the house of commons, having determined that the Slave-trade ought to be gradually abolished, had by that decision manifested their opinion, that it was cruel and unjust. They resolved also, that a gradual abolition of it was not an adequate remedy for its injustice and cruelty; neither could it be deemed a compliance with the general wishes of the people, as expressed in their numerous and urgent petitions to parliament. And they resolved lastly, that the interval, in which the Slave-trade should be permitted to continue, afforded a prospect of redoubled cruelties and ravages on the coast of Africa; and that it imposed therefore an additional obligation on every friend to the cause to use all constitutional means to obtain its immediate abolition.

On the twenty-third of April, the house of commons resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, to consider the subject again; and Mr. Beaufoy was put into the chair.

Mr. Dundas, upon whom the task of introducing a bill for the gradual abolition of the Slave-trade now devolved, rose to offer the outlines of a plan for that purpose. He intended, he said, immediately to abolish that part of the trade, by

which we supplied foreigners with slaves. The other part of it was to be continued seven years from the first of January next. He grounded the necessity of its continuance till this time upon the documents of the Negro population in the different islands. In many of these, slaves were imported, but they were re-exported nearly in equal numbers. Now all these he considered to be in a state to go on without future supplies from Africa. Jamaica and the ceded islands retained almost all the slaves imported into them. This he considered as a proof that these had not attained the same desirable state; and it was therefore necessary, that the trade should be continued longer on this account. It was his intention, however, to provide proper punishments, while it lasted, for abuses both in Africa and the Middle Passage. He would take care, as far as he could, that none but young slaves should be brought from the coast of Africa. He would encourage establishments there for a new species of traffic. Foreign nations should be invited to concur in the abolition. He should propose a prædial rather than a personal service for the West-Indies, and institutions, by which the slaves there should be instructed in religious duties. He concluded by reading several resolutions, which he would leave to the future consideration of the house.

Mr. Pitt then rose. He deprecated the resolutions altogether. He denied also the inferences, which Mr. Dundas had drawn from the West-Indian documents relative to the Negro population. He had looked over his own calculations from the same documents again and again,

and he would submit them, with all their data, if it should be necessary, to the house.

Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Fox held the same language. They contended also, that Mr. Dundas had now proved, a thousand times more strongly than ever the necessity of immediate abolition. All the resolutions he had read were operative against his own reasoning. The latter observed, that the slave-traders were in future only to be allowed to steal innocent children from their disconsolate parents.

After a few observations by Lord Sheffield, Mr. Drake, Colonel Tarleton, and Mr. Rolle, the house adjourned.

On the twenty-fifth of April it resumed the consideration of the subject. Mr. Dundas then went over his former resolutions, and concluded by moving, "that it should not be lawful to import any African Negroes into any British colonies, in ships owned or navigated by British subjects, at any time after the first of January, 1800."

Lord Mornington, (now Marquis Wellesley,) rose to propose an amendment. He congratulated his countrymen, that the Slave-trade had received its death wound. This traffic was founded in injustice; and between right and wrong there could be no compromise. Africa was not to be sacrificed to the apparent good of the West-Indies. He would not repeat those enormities out of the evidence, which had made such a deep impression upon the house. It had been resolved, that the trade should be abolished. The question then was, how long they were to persevere in the crime of its continuance. One had said, that they might be unjust for ten

years longer ; another, only till the beginning of the next century. But this diversity of opinion had proceeded from an erroneous statement of Mr. Dundas against the clear and irrefragable calculations of Mr. Pitt. The former had argued, that, because Jamaica and the ceded islands had retained almost all the slaves which had been imported into them, they were therefore not yet in a situation to support their population without further supplies from Africa. But the truth was, that the slaves, so retained, were kept, not to maintain the population there, but to clear new land. Now the house had determined, that the trade was not to be continued for this purpose. The population, therefore, in the islands was sufficient to continue the ordinary cultivation of them.

After many other observations, he concluded by moving, "that the year 1793 be substituted in the place of the year 1800."

In the course of the debate, which followed, Mr. Burdon stated his conviction of the necessity of immediate abolition ; but he would support the amendment, as the shortest of the terms proposed.

Mr. Robert Thornton would support it also, as the only choice left him. He dared not accede to a motion, by which we were to continue for seven years to imbrue our hands in innocent blood.

Mr. Ryder would not support the trade for one moment if he could avoid it. He could not hold a balance with gold in one scale, and blood in the other.

Mr. William Smith exposed the wickedness of restricting the trade to certain ages. The orig-

inal motion, he said, would only operate as a transfer of cruelty from the aged and the guilty to the young and the innocent. He entreated the house to consider, whether, if it related to their own children, any one of them would vote for it.

Mr. Windham had hitherto felt a reluctance to speaking, not from the abstruseness, but from the simplicity of the subject; but he could not longer be silent, when he observed those arguments of policy creeping again out of their lurking places, which had fled before eloquence and truth. The house had clearly given up the policy of the question. They had been determined by the justice of it. Why were they then to be troubled again with arguments of this nature? These, if admitted, would go to the subversion of all public as well as private morality. Nations were as much bound as individuals to a system of morals, though a breach in the former could not be so easily punished. In private life morality took pretty good care of itself. It was a kind of retail article, in which the returns were speedy. If a man broke open his neighbour's house, he would feel the consequences. There was an ally of virtue, who rendered it the interest of individuals to be moral, and he was called the executioner. But as such punishment did not always await us in our national concerns, we should substitute honour as the guardian of our national conduct. He hoped the West-Indians would consider the character of the mother country, and the obligations to national as well as individual justice. He hoped also they would consider the sufferings, which they occasioned both in Africa, in the passage, and in the West-



Indies. In the passage, indeed, no one was capable of describing them. Disease there had to struggle with the new affliction of chains and punishment. At one view were the irksomeness of a gaol, and the miseries of an hospital; so that the holds of these vessels put him in mind of the regions of the damned. The trade, he said, ought immediately to be abolished. On a comparison of the probable consequences of the abolition of it, he saw on one side only doubtful contingencies, but on the other shame and disgrace.

Sir James Johnstone contended for the immediate abolition of the trade. He had introduced the plough into his own plantation in the West-Indies, and he found the land produced more sugar than when cultivated in the ordinary way by slaves. Even for the sake of the planters, he hoped the abolition would not be long delayed.

Mr. Dundas replied: after which a division took place. The number of votes in favour of the original motion were one hundred and fifty-eight, and for the amendment one hundred and nine.

On the 27th of April the house resumed the subject. Mr. Dundas moved, as before, that the Slave-trade should cease in the year 1800; upon which lord Mornington moved, that the year 1795 should be substituted for the latter period.

In the course of the debate, which followed, Mr. Hubbard said, that he had voted against the abolition, when the year 1793 was proposed; but he thought that, if it were not to take place till 1795, sufficient time would be allowed the planters. He would support this amendment; and he congratulated the house on the prospect

of the final triumph of truth, humanity, and justice.

Mr. Addington preferred the year 1796 to the year 1795.

Mr. Alderman Watson considered the abolition in 1796 to be as destructive as if it were immediate.

A division having taken place, the number of votes in favour of the original motion were one hundred and sixty-one, and in favour of Lord Mornington's amendment for the year 1795, one hundred and twenty-one. Sir Edward Knatchbull, however, seeing that there was a disposition in the house to bring the matter to a conclusion, and that a middle line would be preferred, moved that the year 1796 should be substituted for the year 1800. Upon this the house divided again; when there appeared for the original motion only one hundred and thirty-two, but for the amendment one hundred and fifty-one.

The gradual abolition having been now finally agreed upon for the year 1796, a committee was named, which carried the resolution to the lords.

On the eighth of May, the lords were summoned to consider it. Lord Stormont, after having spoken for some time, moved, that they should hear evidence upon it. Lord Grenville opposed the motion on account of the delay, which would arise from an examination of the witnesses by the house at large: but he moved that such witnesses should be examined by a committee of the house. Upon this a debate ensued, and afterwards a division; when the original motion was carried by sixty-three against thirty-six.

On the 15th of May the lords met again. Evidence was then ordered to be summoned in behalf of those interested in the continuance of the trade. At length it was introduced; but on the 5th of June, when only seven persons had been examined, a motion was made and carried, that the further examinations should be postponed to the next session.

## CHAPTER V.

*Continuation from July 1792 to July 1793—  
Author travels round the kingdom again—Motion to renew the resolution of the last year in the Commons—Motion lost—New Motion in the Commons to abolish the foreign Slave-trade—Motion lost—Proceedings of the Lords.*

THE resolution adopted by the commons that the trade should cease in 1796, was a matter of great joy to many; and several, in consequence of it, returned to the use of sugar. The committee, however, for the abolition did not view it in the same favourable light. They considered it as a political manœuvre to frustrate the accomplishment of the object. But the circumstance, which gave them the most concern, was the resolution of the lords to hear evidence. It was impossible now to say, when the trade would cease. The witnesses in behalf of the merchants and planters had obtained possession of the ground; and they might keep it, if they chose, even till the year 1800, to throw light on a measure which was to be adopted in 1796. The committee found too, that they had again

the laborious task before them of finding out new persons to give testimony in behalf of their cause; for some of their former witnesses were dead, and others were out of the kingdom; and unless they replaced these, there would be no probability of making out that strong case in the lords, which they had established in the commons. It devolved therefore upon me once more to travel for this purpose: but as I was then in too weak a state to bear as much fatigue as formerly, Dr. Dickson relieved me, by taking one part of the tour, namely, that to Scotland, upon himself.

These journeys we performed with considerable success; during which the committee elected Mr. Joseph Townsend of Baltimore, in Maryland, an honourary and corresponding member.

Parliament having met, Mr. Wilberforce, in February 1793, moved, that the house resolve itself into a committee of the whole house on Thursday next, to consider the circumstances of the Slave-trade. This motion was opposed by Sir William Yonge who moved that this day six months should be substituted for Thursday next. A debate ensued: of this, however, as well as of several which followed, I shall give no account; as it would be tedious to the reader to hear a repetition of the same arguments. Suffice it to say, that the motion was lost by a majority of sixty-one to fifty-three.

This sudden refusal of the house of commons to renew their own vote of the former year gave great uneasiness to the friends of the cause. Mr. Wilberforce, however, resolved, that the session should not pass without an attempt to promote it in another form; and accordingly, on the four-

teenth of May he moved for leave to bring in a bill to abolish that part of the Slave-trade, by which the British merchants supplied foreigners with slaves. This motion was opposed like the former ; but was carried by a majority of seven. The bill was then brought in ; and it passed its first and second reading with little opposition ; but on the fifth of June, notwithstanding the eloquence of Mr. Pitt and of Mr. Fox, and the very able speeches of Mr. Francis, Mr. Courtenay, and others, it was lost by a majority of thirty-one to twenty-nine.

In the interval between these motions the question experienced in the lords considerable opposition. The Duke of Clarence moved that the house should not proceed in the consideration of the Slave-trade till after the Easter recess. The earl of Abingdon was still more hostile afterwards. He deprecated the new philosophy. It was as full of mischief as the box of Pandora. The doctrine of the abolition of the Slave-trade was a species of it ; and he concluded by moving, that all further consideration of the subject be postponed. To the epithet, then bestowed upon the abolitionists by this nobleman, the duke of Clarence added those of fanatics and hypocrites, among whom he included Mr. Wilberforce by name. All the other lords, however, who were present, manifested such a dislike to the sentiments of the earl of Abingdon, that he withdrew his motion.

After this the hearing of evidence on the resolution of the house of commons was resumed ; and seven persons were examined before the close of the session.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Continuation from July 1793 to July 1794—  
Author travels round the kingdom again—  
Motion to abolish the foreign Slave-trade re-  
newed in the commons—and carried—but lost  
in the Lords—further proceedings there—Au-  
thor, on account of his declining health, obliged  
to retire from the cause.*

THE committee for the abolition could not view the proceedings of both houses of parliament on this subject during the year 1793, without being alarmed for the fate of their question. The only two sources of hope, which they could discover, were in the disposition then manifested by the peers as to the conduct of the Earl of Abingdon, and in their determination to proceed in the hearing of evidence. The latter circumstance indeed was the more favourable, as the resolution, upon which the witnesses were to be examined, had not been renewed by the commons. These considerations, however, afforded no solid ground for the mind to rest upon. They only broke in upon it, like faint gleams of sunshine, for a moment, and then were gone. In this situation the committee could only console themselves by the reflection, that they had done their duty. In looking, however, to their future services, one thing, and only one, seemed practicable; and this was necessary; namely, to complete the new body of evidence, which they had endeavoured to form in the preceding year. The determination to do this rendered another journey on my part indispensable; and I undertook

it, broken down as my constitution then was, beginning it in September 1793, and completing it in February 1794.

Mr. Wilberforce, in this interval, had digested his plan of operations; and accordingly, early in the session of 1794, he asked leave to renew his former bill, to abolish that part of the trade, by means of which British merchants supplied foreigners with slaves. This request was opposed by Sir William Yonge; but it was granted, on a division of the house, by a majority of sixty-three to forty votes.

When the bill was brought in, it was opposed by the same member; upon which the house divided; and there appeared for Sir William Yonge's amendment thirty-eight votes, but against it fifty-six.

On a motion for the recommitment of the bill, lord Sheffield divided the house, against whose motion there was a majority of forty-two. And on the third reading of it, it was opposed again; but it was at length carried.

At length the bill itself was ushered into the house of lords. On reading it a second time, it was opposed by the duke of Clarence, lord Abingdon, and others. Lord Grenville and the bishop of Rochester declined supporting it. They alleged, as a reason, that they conceived the introduction of it to have been improper pending the inquiry on the general subject of the Slave-trade. This declaration brought up the lords Stanhope and Lauderdale, who charged them with inconsistency as professed friends of the cause. At length the bill was lost. During these discussions the examination of the witnes-

ses was resumed by the lords; but only two of them were heard in this session.\*

After this decision the question was in a desperate state; for if the commons would not renew their own resolution, and the lords would not abolish the foreign part of the Slave-trade, what hope was there, of success? It was obvious too, that in the former house, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas voted against each other. In the latter, the lord chancellor Thurlow opposed every motion in favour of the cause. The committee therefore were reduced to this; either they must exert themselves without hope, or they must wait till some change should take place in their favour. As far as I myself was concerned, all exertion was then over. The nervous system was almost shattered to pieces. Both my memory and my hearing failed me. Sudden dizziness seized my head. A confused singing in the ears followed me, wherever I went. On going to bed the very stairs seemed to dance up and down under me, so that, misplacing my foot, I sometimes fell. Talking too, if it continued but half an hour, exhausted me, so that profuse perspirations followed; and the same effect was produced even by an active exertion of the mind for the like time. These disorders had been brought on by degrees in consequence of the severe labours necessarily attached to the promotion of the cause. For seven years I had a correspondence to maintain with four hundred persons with my own hand. I had some book or other annually to write in behalf of the cause. In this time I had travelled more than thirty-five

\* After this the examinations wholly dropped in the house of lords.



thousand miles in search of evidence, and a great part of these journeys in the night. All this time my mind had been on the stretch. It had been bent too to this one subject; for I had not even leisure to attend to my own concerns. The various instances of barbarity, which had come successively to my knowledge within this period, had vexed, harassed, and afflicted it. The wound, which these had produced, was rendered still deeper by those cruel disappointments before related, which arose from the reiterated refusal of persons to give their testimony, after I had travelled hundreds of miles in quest of them. But the severest stroke was that inflicted by the persecution, begun and pursued by persons interested in the continuance of the trade, of such witnesses as had been examined against them; and whom, on account of their dependent situation in life, it was most easy to oppress. As I had been the means of bringing these forward on these occasions, they naturally came to me, when thus persecuted, as the author of their miseries and their ruin. From their supplications and wants it would have been ungenerous and ungrateful to have fled.\* These different circumstances, by acting together, had at length brought me into the situation just mentioned;

\* The late Mr. Whitbread, to whom one day in deep affliction on this account I related accidentally a circumstance of this kind, generously undertook, in order to make my mind easy upon the subject, to make good all injuries, which should in future arise to individuals from such persecution; and he repaired these, at different times, at a considerable expense. I feel it a duty to divulge this circumstance, out of respect to the memory of one of the best of men, and of one, whom, if the history of his life were written, it would appear to have been an extraordinary honour to the country to have produced.

and I was therefore obliged, though very reluctantly, to be borne out of the field, where I had placed the great honour and glory of my life.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Continuation from July 1794 to July 1799—  
Various motions within this period.*

I PURPOSE, though it may seem abrupt after the division which has hitherto been made of the contents of this volume, to throw the events of the next five years into one short chapter.

Mr. Wilberforce and the members of the committee, whose constitutions had not suffered like my own, were still left; and they determined to persevere in the promotion of their great object as long as their health and their faculties permitted them. The former, accordingly, in the month of February 1795, moved in the house of commons for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the Slave-trade. This motion was then necessary, if, according to the resolution of that house, the Slave-trade was to cease in 1796. It was opposed, however, by Sir William Yonge, and unfortunately lost by a majority of seventy-eight to fifty-seven.

In the year 1796 Mr. Wilberforce renewed his efforts in the commons. He asked leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the Slave-trade, but in a limited time. The motion was opposed as before; but on a division, there were for it ninety-three, and against it only sixty-seven.

The bill having been brought in, was opposed

in its second reading ; but it was carried through it by a majority of sixty-four to thirty-one.

In a future stage it was opposed again ; but it triumphed by a majority of seventy-six to thirty-one. Mr. Eliott was then put into the chair. Several clauses were adopted ; and the first of March 1797, was fixed for the abolition of the trade : but in the next stage of it, after a long speech from Mr. Dundas, it was lost by a majority of seventy-four, against seventy.

In the year 1798, Mr. Wilberforce asked leave to renew his former bill, to abolish the Slave-trade within a limited time. He was refused.

In the year 1799, undismayed by these different disappointments, he again renewed his motion. Colonel M. Wood, Mr. Petrie, and others, among whom were Mr. Windham and Mr. Dundas, opposed it. Messrs. Pitt, Fox, W. Smith, Sir William Dolben, Sir R. Milbank, Mr. Hobhouse, and Mr. Canning, supported it. Sir R. Milbank contended, that modifications of a system fundamentally wrong ought not to be tolerated by the legislature of a free nation. Mr. Hobhouse said, that nothing could be so nefarious as this traffic in blood. It was unjust in its principle. It was cruel in its practice. It admitted of no regulation whatever. The abolition of it was called for equally by morality and sound policy. Mr. Canning exposed the folly of Mr. Dundas, who had said, that as parliament had in the year 1787 left the abolition to the colonial assemblies, it ought not to be taken out of their hands. This great event, he observed, could only be accomplished in two ways ; either by these assemblies, or by the parliament of England. Now the

members of the assembly of Jamaica had professed, that they would never abolish the trade. Was it not therefore idle to rely upon them for the accomplishment of it? He then took a very comprehensive view of the arguments which had been offered in the course of the debate, and was severe upon the planters in the house, who, he said, had brought into familiar use certain expressions, with no other view than to throw a veil over their odious system. Among these was....their right to import labourers. But never was the word "labourers" so prostituted, as when it was used for slaves. Never was the word "right" so prostituted, not even when 'The Rights of Man were talked of, as when the right to trade in man's blood was asserted by the members of an enlightened assembly. Never was the right of importing these labourers worse defended than when the antiquity of the Slave-trade, and its foundation on ancient acts of parliament, were brought forward in its support. We had been cautioned not to lay our unhallowed hands on the ancient institution of the Slave-trade; nor to subvert a fabric, raised by the wisdom of our ancestors, and consecrated by a lapse of ages. But on what principles did we usually respect the institutions of antiquity? We respected them when we saw some shadow of departed worth and usefulness; or some memorial of what had been creditable to mankind. But was this the case with the Slave-trade? Had it begun in principles of justice or national honour, which the changes of the world alone had impaired? Had it to plead former services and glories in behalf of its present disgrace? In looking at it we saw nothing but crimes and suf-

ferings from the beginning; nothing but what wounded and convulsed our feelings; nothing but what excited indignation and horror. It had not even to plead what could often be said in favour of the most unjustifiable wars. Though conquest had sometimes originated in ambition, and in the worst of motives, yet the conquerors and the conquered were sometimes blended afterwards into one people; so that a system of common interest arose out of former differences. But where was the analogy of the cases? Was it only at the outset that we could trace violence and injustice on the part of the Slave-trade? Were the oppressors and the oppressed so reconciled, that enmities ultimately ceased? No. Was it reasonable then to urge a prescriptive right, not to the fruits of an ancient and forgotten evil, but to a series of new violences; to a chain of fresh enormities; to cruelties continually repeated; and of which every instance inflicted a fresh calamity, and constituted a separate and substantial crime?

The debate being over, the house divided; when it appeared that there were for Mr. Wilberforce's motion seventy-four, but against it eighty-two.

The motion for the general abolition of the Slave-trade having been thus lost again in the commons, a new motion was made there soon after, by Mr. Henry Thornton, on the same subject. The prosecution of this traffic on certain parts of the coast of Africa had become so injurious to the new settlement at Sierra Leone, that not only its commercial prospects were impeded, but its safety endangered. Mr. Thornton therefore brought in a bill to confine the Slave-trade

within certain limits. But even this bill, though it had for its object only to free a portion of the coast from the ravages of this traffic, was opposed by Messrs. Gascoyne, Dent, and others. Petitions also were presented against it. At length, after two divisions, on the first of which there were thirty-two votes to twenty-seven, and on the second thirty-eight to twenty-two, it passed through all its stages.

When it was introduced into the lords the petitions were renewed against it. Delay also was interposed to its progress by the examination of witnesses. It was not till the 5th of July that the matter was brought to issue, when the bill was lost by a majority of sixty-eight to sixty-one, including personal votes and proxies.

I cannot conclude this chapter without offering a few remarks. And, first, I may observe, as the substance of the debates has not been given for the period which it contains, that Mr. Wilberforce, upon whom too much praise cannot be bestowed for his perseverance from year to year, amidst the disheartening circumstances which attended his efforts, brought every new argument to bear, which either the discovery of new light or the events of the times produced. I may observe also, in justice to the memories of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, that there was no debate within this period, in which they did not take a part; and in which they did not irradiate others from the profusion of their own light: and thirdly, that in consequence of the efforts of the three, conjoined with those of others, the great cause of the abolition was secretly gaining ground. Many members who were not connected with the trade, but who had yet hitherto supported it,

were on the point of conversion. Though the question had oscillated backwards and forwards, so that an ordinary spectator could have discovered no gleam of hope at these times, nothing is more certain, than that the powerful eloquence then displayed had smoothed the resistance to it; had shortened its vibrations; and had prepared it for a state of rest.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Continuation from July 1799 to July 1805—  
Various motions within this period.*

THE question had now been brought forward in almost every possible way, and yet had been eventually lost. The total and immediate abolition had been attempted; and then the gradual. The gradual had again been tried for the year 1798, then for 1795, and then for 1796, at which period it was decreed, but never allowed to be executed. An abolition of a part of the trade, as it related to the supply of foreigners with slaves, was the next measure proposed; and when this failed, the abolition of another part of it, as it related to the making of a certain portion of the coast of Africa sacred to liberty, was attempted: but this failed also. Mr. Wilberforce therefore thought it prudent, not to press the abolition as a mere annual measure, but to allow members time to digest the eloquence, which had been bestowed upon it for the last five years, and to wait till some new circumstances should favour its introduction. Accordingly he allowed the years 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803 to

pass over without any further parliamentary notice than the moving for certain papers; during which he took an opportunity of assuring the house, that he had not grown cool in the cause, but that he would agitate it in a future session.

The year 1804 was fixed upon for renewed exertion, in the humane cause, the committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade elected James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, Henry Brougham, Esqrs., and William Phillips, into their own body. Four other members also, Robert Grant and John Thornton, Esqrs., and William Manser and William Allen, were afterwards added to the list. Among the reasons for fixing upon this year one may be assigned, namely, that the Irish members, in consequence of the union which had taken place between the two countries, had then all taken their seats in the house of commons; and that most of them were friendly to the cause.

This being the situation of things, Mr. Wilberforce, on the 30th of March, asked leave to renew his bill for the abolition of the Slave-trade within a limited time. Mr. Fuller opposed the motion. A debate ensued.

An amendment having been proposed by Mr. Manning, a division took place upon it, when leave was given to bring in the bill, by a majority of one hundred and twenty-four to forty-nine.

On the 7th of June, the second reading of the bill was moved. Upon a division, there appeared for the second reading one hundred, and against it forty-two.

On the twenty-seventh of June the bill though opposed in its last stage was carried by a major-



ity of sixty-nine to thirty-six. It was then taken up to the lords; but on a motion of lord Hawkesbury, then a member of that house, the discussion of it was postponed to the next year.

The session being ended, the committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade, increased its number, by the election of the Right Honourable Lord Teignmouth, Dr. Dickson, and Wilson Birkbeck, as members.

In the year 1806, Mr. Wilberforce renewed his motion of the former year. Colonel Tarleton, Sir William Yonge, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Gascoyne opposed it. Leave was given him to introduce his bill.

On the second reading of it a serious opposition took place; and an amendment was moved for postponing it till that day six months. The amendment was opposed by Mr. Fox and Mr. Huddleston. The latter could not help lifting his voice against this monstrous traffic in the sinews and blood of man, the toleration of which had so long been the disgrace of the British legislature. He did not charge the enormous guilt resulting from it upon the nation at large; for the nation had washed its hands of it by the numerous petitions it had sent against it; and it had since been a matter of astonishment to all Christendom, how the constitutional guardians of British freedom should have sanctioned elsewhere the greatest system of cruelty and oppression in the world.

He said that a curse attended this trade even in the mode of defending it. By a certain fatality, none but the vilest arguments were brought forward, which corrupted the very persons, who used them. Every one of these were built on

the narrow ground of interest; of pecuniary profit; of sordid gain; in opposition to every higher consideration; to every motive that had reference to humanity, justice, and religion; or to that great principle, which comprehended them all. Place only before the most determined advocate of this odious traffic the exact image of himself in the garb and harness of a slave, dragged and whipped about like a beast; place this image also before him, and paint it as that of one without a ray of hope to cheer him; and you would extort from him the reluctant confession, that he would not endure for an hour the misery, to which he condemned his fellow-man for life. How dared he then to use this selfish plea of interest against the voice of the generous sympathies of his nature? But even upon this narrow ground the advocates for the traffic had been defeated. If the unhallowed argument of expediency was worth any thing when opposed to moral rectitude, or if it were to supercede the precepts of Christianity, where was a man to stop, or what line was he to draw? For any thing he knew, it might be physically true, that human blood was the best manure for the land; but who ought to shed it on that account? True expediency, however, was, where it ever would be found, on the side of that system, which was most merciful and just. He asked how it happened, that sugar could be imported cheaper from the East-Indies, than from the West, notwithstanding the vast difference of the length of the voyages, but on account of the impolicy of slavery, or that it was made in the former case by the industry of free men, and in the latter by the languid drudgery of slaves.

As he had had occasion to advert to the Eastern part of the world, he would make an observation upon an argument, which had been collected from that quarter. The condition of the Negroes in the West-Indies had been lately compared with that of the Hindoos. But he would observe that the Hindoo, miserable as his hovel was, had sources of pride and happiness, to which not only the West-Indian slave, but even his master was a stranger. He was to be sure a peasant; and his industry was subservient to the gratifications of an European lord. But he was, in his own belief, vastly superiour to him. He viewed him as one of the lowest cast. He would not on any consideration eat from the same plate. He would not suffer his son to marry the daughter of his master, even if she could bring him all the West-Indies as her portion. He would observe too, that the Hindoo peasant drank his water from his native well; that, if his meal were scanty, he received it from the hand of her, who was most dear to him; that, when he laboured, he laboured for her and his offspring. His daily task being finished, he reposed with his family. No retrospect of the happiness of former days, compared with existing misery, disturbed his slumber; nor horrid dreams occasioned him to wake in agony at the dawn of day. No barbarous sounds of cracking whips reminded him, that with the form and image of a man his destiny was that of the beast of the field. Let the advocates for the bloody traffic state what they had to set off on their side of the question against the comforts and independence of the man, with whom they compared the slave.

The amendment was supported by Sir Wil-

liam Yonge, Sir William Pulteny, Colonel Tarleton, Mr. Gascoyne, C. Brook, and Hiley Addington. On dividing the house upon it, there appeared for it seventy-seven, but against it only seventy.

This loss of the question, after it had been carried in the last year by so great a majority, being quite unexpected, was a matter of severe disappointment; and might have discouraged the friends of the cause in this infancy of their renewed efforts, if they had not discovered the reason of its failure. After due consideration it appeared, that no fewer than nine members, who had never been absent once in sixteen years when it was agitated, gave way to engagements on the day of the motion, from a belief that it was safe. It appeared also, that out of the great number of Irish members, who supported it in the former year, only nine were in the house, when it was lost.

The causes of the failure having been found accidental, and capable of a remedy, it was resolved, that an attempt should be made immediately in the house in a new form. Accordingly Lord Henry Petty signified his intention of bringing in a bill for the abolition of the foreign part of the Slave-trade; but the impeachment of Lord Melville, and other weighty matters coming on, the notice was not acted upon in that session.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Continuation from July 1805 to July 1806—  
 Author returns to his duty in the committee—  
 travels again round the kingdom—Death of  
 Mr. Pitt—his character, as it related to the  
 question—Motion for the abolition of the for-  
 eign Slave-trade—resolution to take measures  
 for the total abolition of it—Address to the  
 king to negotiate with foreign powers for their  
 concurrence in it—Motion to prevent any new  
 vessel going into the trade—these carried  
 through both houses of parliament.*

It was now almost certain, to the inexpressible joy of the committee, that the cause, with proper vigilance, could be carried in the next session in the house of commons. It became them therefore to prepare to support it. In adverting to measures for this purpose, it occurred to them, that the house of lords, if the question should be then carried to them from the commons, might insist upon hearing evidence on the general subject. But, alas, even the body of witnesses, which had been last collected, was broken by death or dispersion! It was therefore to be formed again. In this situation it devolved upon me, as I had now returned to the committee after an absence of nine years to take another journey for this purpose.

This journey I performed with extraordinary success. In the course of it I had also much satisfaction on another account. I found the old friends of the cause still faithful to it. It was remarkable, however, that the youth of the ris-

ing generation knew but little about the question. For the last eight or nine years the committee had not circulated any books; and the debates in the commons during that time had not furnished them with the means of an adequate knowledge concerning it. When, however, I conversed with these, as I travelled along, I discovered a profound attention to what I said; an earnest desire to know more of the subject; and a generous warmth in favour of the injured Africans, which I foresaw could soon be turned into enthusiasm. Hence I perceived that the cause furnished us with endless sources of rallying; and that the ardour, which we had seen with so much admiration in former years, could be easily renewed.

I had scarcely finished my journey, when Mr. Pitt died. This event took place in January 1806. I shall stop therefore to make a few observations upon his character, as it related to this cause. This I feel myself bound in justice to do, because his sincerity towards it has been generally questioned.

The way, in which Mr. Pitt became acquainted with this question, has already been explained. A few doubts having been removed, when it was first started, he professed himself a friend to the abolition. The first proof, which he gave of his friendship to it is known but to few; but it is, nevertheless, true, that so early as in 1788, he occasioned a communication to be made to the French government, in which he recommended a union of the two countries for the promotion of the great measure. This proposition seemed to be then new and strange to the

court of France ; and the answer was not favourable.

From this time his efforts were reduced within the boundaries of his own powers. As far, however, as he had scope, he exerted them. If we look at him in his parliamentary capacity, it must be acknowledged by all, that he took an active, strenuous, and consistent part, and this, year after year, by which he realized his professions. In my own private communications with him, which were frequent, he never failed to give proofs of a similar disposition. I had always free access to him. I had no previous note or letter to write for admission. Whatever papers I wanted, he ordered. He exhibited also in his conversation with me on these occasions marks of a more than ordinary interest in the welfare of the cause. Among the subjects, which were then started, there was one, which was always near his heart. This was the civilization of Africa. He looked upon this great work as a debt due to that continent for the many injuries we had inflicted upon it : and had the abolition succeeded sooner, as in the infancy of his exertions he had hoped, I know he had a plan, suited no doubt to the capaciousness of his own mind, for such establishments in Africa, as he conceived would promote in due time this important end.

Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, having been called to the head of the executive government on the death of Mr. Pitt, the cause was ushered into parliament under new auspices. In a former year his majesty had issued a proclamation, by which British merchants were forbidden, (with certain defined exceptions,) to import slaves

into the colonies, which had been conquered by the British arms in the course of the war. This circumstance afforded an opportunity of trying the question in the house of commons with the greatest hope of success. Accordingly Sir A. Pigott, the attorney-general, as an officer of the crown, brought in a bill on the thirty-first of March 1806, the first object of which was, to give effect to the proclamation now mentioned. The second was, to prohibit British subjects from being engaged in importing slaves into the colonies of any foreign power, whether hostile or neutral. And the third was, to prohibit British subjects and British capital from being employed in carrying on a Slave-trade in foreign ships: and also to prevent the outfit of foreign ships from British ports.

Sir A. Pigott, on the introduction of this bill, made an appropriate speech. On the third reading a division being called for, there appeared for it thirty-five, and against it only thirteen.

On the 7th of May it was introduced into the lords. When a division took place, there appeared to be in favour of it forty-three, and against it eighteen.

During the discussions, to which this bill gave birth, Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox declared in substance, in their respective houses of parliament, that they felt the question of the Slave-trade to be one, which involved the dearest interests of humanity, and the most urgent claims of policy, justice, and religion; and that, should they succeed in effecting its abolition, they would regard that success as entailing more true glory on their administration, and more honour and advantage on their country, than any other mea-



sure, in which they could be engaged. The bill having passed, (the first which dismembered this cruel trade,) it was thought proper to follow it up in a prudent manner; and, as there was not then time in the advanced period of the session to bring in another for the total extinction of it, to move a resolution, by which both houses should record those principles, on which the propriety of the latter measure was founded. It was judged also expedient that Mr. Fox, as the prime minister in the house of commons, should introduce it there.

On the 10th of June Mr. Fox rose. He began by saying that the motion, with which he should conclude, would tend in its consequences to effect the total abolition of the Slave-trade; and he confessed that, since he had sat in that house, (a period of between thirty and forty years,) if he had done nothing else, but had only been instrumental in carrying through this measure, he should think his life well spent; and should retire quite satisfied, that he had not lived in vain.

In adverting to the principle of the trade, he noticed some strong expressions of Mr. Burke concerning it. "To deal in human flesh and blood," said that great man, "or to deal, not in the labour of men, but in men themselves, was to devour the root, instead of enjoying the fruit of human diligence."

He combated the argument, that the abolition would ruin the West-Indian islands. In doing this he paid a handsome compliment to the memory of Mr. Pitt, whose speech upon this particular point was, he said, the most powerful and convincing of any he had ever heard. Indeed they, who had not heard it could have no notion

of it. It was a speech no less remarkable for splendid eloquence, than for solid sense and convincing reason; supported by calculations founded on facts, and conclusions drawn from premises, as correctly as if they had been mathematical propositions; all tending to prove that, instead of the West-Indian plantations suffering an injury, they would derive a material benefit by the abolition of the Slave-trade. He then called upon the friends of this great man to show their respect for his memory by their votes; and he concluded with moving, "that this house, considering the African Slave-trade to be contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and policy, will, with all practicable expedition, take effectual measures for the abolition of the said trade, in such a manner, and at such a period, as may be deemed advisable."

Sir Ralph Milbank rose, and seconded the motion.

General Tarleton rose next. He deprecated the abolition, on account of the effect which it would have on the trade and revenue of the country.

Mr. Francis said the merchants of Liverpool were at liberty to ask for compensation; but he, for one, would never grant it for the loss of a trade, which had been declared to be contrary to humanity and justice. As a uniform friend to this great cause, he wished Mr. Fox had not introduced a resolution, but a real bill for the abolition of the Slave-trade. He believed that both houses were then disposed to do it away. He wished the golden opportunity might not be lost.

Sir S. Romilly, the solicitor general, remark-

ed, that the cruelty and injustice of the Slave-trade had been established by evidence beyond a doubt. It had been shown to be carried on by rapine, robbery, and murder; by fomenting and encouraging wars; by false accusations; and imaginary crimes. The unhappy victims were torn away not only in the time of war, but of profound peace. They were then carried across the Atlantic, in a manner too horrible to describe; and afterwards subjected to eternal slavery. In support of the continuance of such a traffic, he knew of nothing but assertions already disproved, and arguments already refuted. Since the year 1796, when it was to cease by a resolution of parliament, no less than three hundred and sixty thousand Africans had been torn away from their native land. What an accumulation was this to our former guilt!

General Gascoyne made two extraordinary assertions: First, that the trade was defensible on Scriptural ground. "Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen, that are round about thee; of them shall you have bondmen and bondmaids. And thou shalt take them as an heritage for thy children after thee to inherit them for a possession; they shall be thy bondmen for ever." Secondly, that the trade had been so advantageous to this country, that it would have been advisable even to institute a new one, if the old had not existed.

Sir William Yonge censured the harsh language of Sir Samuel Romilly, who had applied the terms rapine, robbery, and murder to those, who were connected with the Slave-trade. He considered the resolution of Mr. Fox as a prelude to a bill for the abolition of that traffic, and

this bill as a prelude to emancipation, which would not only be dangerous in itself, but would change the state of property in the islands.

Mr. Canning renewed his professions of friendship to the cause. He did not like the present resolution; yet he would vote for it. He should have been better pleased with a bill, which would strike at once at the root of this detestable commerce.

Mr. Manning wished the question to be deferred to the next session. He hoped compensation would then be brought forward as connected with it. Nothing, however, effectual could be done without the concurrence of the planters.

Mr. Windham deprecated not only the Slave-trade, but slavery also. They were essentially connected with each other. They were both evils, and ought both of them to be done away. Indeed, if emancipation would follow the abolition, he should like the latter measure the better. Rapine, robbery, and murder were the true characteristics of this traffic. The same epithets had not indeed been applied to slavery, because this was a condition, in which some part of the human race had been at every period of the history of the world. It was, however, a state, which ought not to be allowed to exist. But notwithstanding all these confessions, he should weigh well the consequences of the abolition before he gave it his support. It would be on a balance between the evils themselves and the consequences of removing them, that he should decide for himself on this question.

Mr. Fox took a view of all the arguments, which had been advanced by the opponents of the abolition; and having given an appropriate

answer to each, the house divided, when there appeared for the resolution one hundred and fourteen, and against it but fifteen.

Immediately after this division Mr. Wilberforce moved an address to his Majesty, "praying that he would be graciously pleased to direct a negotiation to be entered into, by which foreign powers should be invited to cooperate with his Majesty in measures to be adopted for the abolition of the African Slave-trade."

This address was carried without a division. It was also moved and carried, that "these resolutions be communicated to the lords; and that their concurrence should be desired therein."

On the 24th of June the lords met to consider of the resolution and address. The Earl of Westmoreland proposed, that both counsel and evidence should be heard against them; but his proposition was overruled.

Lord Grenville then read the resolution of the commons. This resolution, he said, stated first, that the Slave-trade was contrary to humanity, justice, and sound policy. That it was contrary to humanity was obvious; for humanity might be said to be sympathy for the distress of others, or a desire to accomplish benevolent ends by good means. But did not the Slave-trade convey ideas the very reverse of this definition? It deprived men of all those comforts, in which it pleased the Creator to make the happiness of his creatures to consist, of the blessings of society, of the charities of the dear relationships of husband, wife, father, son, and kindred; of the due discharge of the relative duties of these, and of that freedom, which in its pure and natural

sense was one of the greatest gifts of God to man.

Having shown the inhumanity, he would proceed to the second point in the resolution, or the injustice, of the trade. We had two ideas of justice, first, as it belonged to society by virtue of a social compact; and, secondly, as it belonged to men, not as citizens of a community, but as beings of one common nature. In a state of nature; man had a right to the fruit of his own labour absolutely to himself; and one of the main purposes, for which he entered into society, was, that he might be better protected in the possession of his rights. In both cases therefore it was manifestly unjust, that a man should be made to labour during the whole of his life, and yet have no benefit from his labour. Hence the Slave-trade and the colonial slavery were a violation of the very principle, upon which all law for the protection of property was founded. Whatever benefit was derived from that trade to an individual, it was derived from dishonour and dishonesty. He forced from the unhappy victim of it that, which the latter did not wish to give him; and he gave to the same victim that, which he in vain attempted to show was an equivalent to the thing he took, it being a thing for which there was no equivalent; and which, if he had not obtained by force, he would not have possessed at all. Nor could there be any answer to this reasoning, unless it could be proved, that it had pleased God to give to the inhabitants of Britain a property in the liberty and life of the natives of Africa. But he would go further on this subject. The injustice complained of was not confined to the bare circumstance of robbing

them of the right to their own labour. It was conspicuous throughout the system. They, who bought them, became guilty of all the crimes which had been committed in procuring them; and, when they possessed them, of all the crimes which belonged to their inhuman treatment. The injustice in the latter case amounted frequently to murder. For what was it but murder to pursue a practice, which produced untimely death to thousands of innocent and helpless beings? It was a duty, which their lordships owed to their Creator, if they hoped for mercy, to do away this monstrous oppression.

With respect to the impolicy of the trade (the third point in the resolution) he would say at once, that whatever was inhuman and unjust must be impolitic. He had, however, no objection to argue the point upon its own particular merits: and, first, he would observe, that a great man, Mr. Pitt, now no more, had exerted his vast powers on many subjects to the admiration of his hearers; but on none more successfully than on the subject of the abolition of the Slave-trade. He proved, after making an allowance for the price paid for the slaves in the West-Indies, for the loss of them in the seasoning, and for the expense of maintaining them afterwards, and comparing these particulars with the amount in value of their labour there, that the evils endured by the victims of the traffic were no gain to the master, in whose service they took place. Indeed Mr. Long had laid it down in his history of Jamaica, that the best way to secure the planters from ruin would be to do that, which the resolution recommended. It was notorious, that when any planter was in distress, and sought to relieve

himself by increasing the labour on his estate by means of the purchase of new slaves, the measure invariably tended to his destruction. What then was the importation of fresh Africans but a system, tending to the general ruin of the islands?

To expose the impolicy of the trade further, he would observe, that it was an allowed axiom, that as the condition of man was improved, he became more useful. The history of our own country, in very early times, exhibited instances of internal slavery, and this to a considerable extent. But we should find that precisely in proportion as that slavery was ameliorated, the power and prosperity of the country flourished. This was exactly applicable to the case in question. There could be no general amelioration of slavery in the West-Indies, while the Slave-trade lasted: but, if we were to abolish it, we should make it the interest of every owner of slaves to do that, which would improve their condition; and which indeed would lead ultimately to the annihilation of slavery itself. This great event, however, could not be accomplished at once. It could only be effected in a course of time.

It would be endless, he said, to go into all the cases, which would manifest the impolicy of this odious traffic. Inhuman as it was, unjust as it was, he believed it to be equally impolitic; and if their lordships should be of this opinion also, he hoped they would agree to that part of the resolution, in which these truths were expressed. With respect to the other part of it, or that they would proceed to abolish the trade, he observed, that neither the time nor the manner of doing it were



specified. Hence if any of them should differ as to these particulars, they might yet vote for the resolution ; as they were not pledged to any thing definite in these respects ; provided they thought that the trade should be abolished at some time or other ; and he did not believe, that there was any one of them, who would sanction its continuance for ever.

Lord Hawkesbury said, that he did not mean to discuss the question on the ground of justice and humanity, as contradistinguished from sound policy. If it could fairly be made out, that the African Slave-trade was contrary to justice and humanity, it ought to be abolished. It did not, however, follow, because a great evil subsisted, that therefore it should be removed ; for it might be comparatively a less evil, than that which would accompany the attempt to remove it. The noble lord, who had just spoken, had exemplified this : for though slavery was a great evil in itself, he was of opinion, that it could not be done away but in a course of time.

The Bishop of London (Dr. Porteus) began by noticing the concession of the last speaker, namely, that, if the trade was contrary to humanity and justice, it ought to be abolished. He expected, he said, that the noble lord would have proved, that it was not contrary to these great principles, before he had supported its continuance ; but not a word had he said to show, that the basis of the resolution in these respects was false. It followed then, he thought, that as the noble lord had not disproved the premises, he was bound to abide by the conclusion.

The lord chancellor (Erskine) confessed, that he was not satisfied with his own conduct on this

subject. He acknowledged with deep contrition, that, during the time he was a member of the other house, he had not once attended, when this great question was discussed.

In the West-Indies he could say personally, that the slaves were well treated, where he had an opportunity of seeing them. But no judgement was to be formed there with respect to the evils complained of. They must be appreciated as they existed in the trade. Of these he had also been an eyewitness. It was on this account that he felt contrition for not having attended the house on this subject; for there were some cruelties in this traffic which the human imagination could not aggravate. He had witnessed such scenes over the whole coast of Africa: and he could say, that, if their lordships could only have a sudden glimpse of them, they would be struck with horror; and would be astonished, that they could ever have been permitted to exist. What then would they say to their continuance year after year, and from age to age.

From information, which he could not dispute, he was warranted in saying, that on this continent husbands were fraudulently and forcibly severed from their wives, and parents from their children; and that all the ties of blood and affection were torn up by the roots. He had himself seen the unhappy natives put together in heaps in the hold of a ship, where, with every possible attention to them, their situation must have been intolerable. He had also heard proved, in courts of justice, facts still more dreadful than those which he had seen. One of these he would just mention. The slaves on

board a certain ship rose in a mass to liberate themselves; and having advanced far in the pursuit of their object, it became necessary to compel them by force. Some of them yielded; some of them were killed in the scuffle; but many of them actually jumped into the sea and were drowned; thus preferring death to the misery of their situation; while others hung to the ship, repenting of their rashness, and bewailing with frightful noises their horrid fate. Thus the whole vessel exhibited but one hideous scene of wretchedness. They, who were subdued, and secured in chains, were seized with the flux, which carried many of them off. These things were proved in a trial before a British jury, which had to consider, whether this was a loss, which fell within the policy of insurance, the slaves being regarded as if they had been only a cargo of dead matter. He could mention other instances, but they were much too shocking to be described. Surely their lordships could never consider such a traffic to be consistent with humanity or justice. It was impossible.

That the trade had long subsisted there was no doubt; but this was no argument for its continuance. Many evils of much longer standing had been done away; and it was always our duty to attempt to remove them. Should we not exult in the consideration, that we, the inhabitants of a small island, at the extremity of the globe, almost at its north pole, were become the morning-star to enlighten the nations of the earth, and to conduct them out of the shades of darkness into the realms of light; thus exhibiting to an astonished and an admiring world the blessings of a

free constitution? Let us then not allow such a glorious opportunity to escape us.

It had been urged that we should suffer by the abolition of the Slave-trade. He believed we should not suffer. He believed that our duty and our interest were inseparable: and he had no difficulty in saying, in the face of the world, that his own opinion was, that the interests of a nation would be best preserved by its adherence to the principles of humanity, justice, and religion.

The Earl of Westmoreland said, that the African Slave-trade might be contrary to humanity and justice, and yet it might be politic; at least, it might be inconsistent with humanity, and yet be not inconsistent with justice: this was the case, when we executed a criminal, or engaged in war.

Lord Holland, in reply, said that the noble earl had made a difference between humanity, justice, and sound policy. God forbid, that we should ever admit such distinctions in this country! But he had gone further, and said, that a thing might be inhuman, and yet not unjust; and he put the case of the execution of a criminal in support of it. Did he not by this position confound all notions of right and wrong in human institutions? When a criminal was justly executed, was not the execution justice to him who suffered, and humanity to the body of the people at large?

He wished most heartily for the total abolition of the trade. He was convinced, that it was both inhuman, unjust, and impolitic. This had always been his opinion as an individual since he was capable of forming one. It was his opin-

ion then as a legislator. It was his opinion as a colonial proprietor ; and it was his opinion as an Englishman, wishing for the prosperity of the British empire.

The Earl of Suffolk contended, that the population of the slaves in the islands could be kept up by good treatment, so as to be sufficient for their cultivation. He entered into a detail of calculations from the year 1772 downwards in support of this statement. He believed all the miseries of St. Domingo arose from the vast importation of Africans. He had such a deep sense of the inhumanity and injustice of the Slave-trade, that, if ever he wished any action of his life to be recorded, it would be that of the vote he should then give in support of the resolution.

Lord Sidmouth said, that he agreed to the substance of the resolution, but yet he could not support it. Could he be convinced that the trade would be injurious to the cause of humanity and justice, the question with him would be decided ; for policy could not be opposed to humanity and justice. He had been of opinion for the last twenty years, that the interests of the country and those of numerous individuals were so deeply blended with this traffic, that we should be very cautious how we proceeded. With respect to the cultivation of new lands, he would not allow a single negro to be imported for such a purpose ; but he must have a regard to the old plantations. When he found a sufficient increase in the black population to continue the cultivation already established there, then, but not till then, he would agree to an abolition of the trade.

Earl Stanhope said he would not detain their

lordships long. He could not, however, help expressing his astonishment at what had fallen from the last speaker ; for he had evidently confessed that the Slave-trade was inhuman and unjust, and then he had insinuated, that it was neither inhuman nor unjust to continue it. A more paradoxical or whimsical opinion, he believed, was never entertained, or more whimsically expressed in that house. The noble viscount had talked of the interests of the planters ; but this was but a part of the subject ; for surely the people of Africa were not to be forgotten. He did not understand the practice of complimenting the planters with the lives of men, women, and helpless children by thousands for the sake of their pecuniary advantage ; and they, who adopted it, whatever they might think of the consistency of their own conduct, offered an insult to the sacred names of humanity and justice.

Earl Grosvenor could not but express the joy he felt at the hope, after all his disappointments, that this wicked trade would be done away. He hoped that his Majesty's ministers were in earnest, and that they would, early in the next session, take this great question up with a determination to go through with it ; so that another year should not pass, before we extended the justice and humanity of the country to the helpless and unhappy inhabitants of Africa.

Earl Fitzwilliam said he was fearful, lest the calamities of St. Domingo should be brought home to our own islands. We ought not, he thought, too hastily to adopt the resolution on that account. He should therefore support the previous question.

Lord Ellenborough said, he was sorry to differ

from his noble friend (lord Sidmouth) and yet he could not help saying that if after twenty years, during which this question had been discussed by the houses of parliament, their lordships' judgements were not ripe for its determination, he could not look with any confidence to a time, when they would be ready to decide it.

The question then before them was short and plain. It was, whether the African Slave-trade was inhuman, unjust, and impolitic. If the premises were true, we could not too speedily bring it to a conclusion.

Earl Spencer agreed with the noble viscount (Sidmouth) that the amelioration of the condition of the slaves was an object, which might be effected in the West-Indies; but he was certain, that the most effectual way of improving it would be by the total and immediate abolition of the Slave-trade; and for that reason he would support the resolution. Had the resolution held out emancipation to them, it would not have had his assent; for it would have ill become the character of this country, if it had been once promised, to have withheld it from them. It was to such deception that the horrors of St. Domingo were to be attributed. He would not enter into the discussion of the general subject at present. He was convinced that the trade was what the resolution stated it to be, inhuman, unjust, and impolitic. He wished therefore, most earnestly indeed, for its abolition. As to the mode of effecting it, it should be such, as would be attended with the least inconvenience to all parties. At the same time he would not allow small inconveniences to stand in the way of the great claims of humanity, justice, and religion.

The question was then put on the resolution, and carried by a majority of forty-one to twenty. The same address also to his Majesty, which had been agreed upon by the commons, was directly afterward moved. This also was carried, but without the necessity of a division.

The resolution and the motion having passed both houses, one other parliamentary measure was yet necessary to complete the proceedings of this session. It was now almost universally believed, in consequence of what had already taken place there, that the Slave-trade had received its death wound; and that it would not long survive it. It was supposed therefore, that the slave-merchants would, in the interim, fit out not only all the vessels they had, but even buy others, to make what might be called their last harvest. Hence extraordinary scenes of rapine, and murder, would be occasioned in Africa. To prevent these a new bill was necessary. This was accordingly introduced into the commons. It enacted, but with one exception, that from and after the first of August 1806, no vessel should clear out for the Slave-trade, unless it should have been previously employed by the same owner or owners in the said trade, or should be proved to have been contracted for previously to the 10th of June 1806, for the purpose of being employed in that trade. It may now be sufficient to say that this bill also passed both houses of parliament; soon after which the session ended.



## CHAPTER X.

*Continuation from July 1806 to March 1807.—*

*Death of Mr. Fox.—Bill for the total abolition of the Slave-trade carried in the House of Lords—sent from thence to the Commons—amended and passed there—carried back, and passed with its amendments by the Lords—receives the royal assent.—Reflections on this great event.*

IT was impossible for the committee to look back to the proceedings of the last session, as they related to the great question under their care, without feeling a profusion of joy, as well as of gratitude to those, by whose virtuous endeavours they had taken place. But, alas, how few of our earthly pleasures come to us without alloy! a melancholy event succeeded. We had the painful intelligence, in the month of October 1806, that one of the oldest and warmest friends of the cause was then numbered with the dead.

Of the character of Mr. Fox, as it related to this cause, I am bound to take notice. And, first, I may observe, that he professed an attachment to it almost as soon as it was ushered into the world. Early in the year 1788, when he was waited upon by a deputation of the committee, his language was, as has appeared in the first volume, "that he would support their object to its fullest extent, being convinced that there was no remedy for the evil but in the total abolition of the trade."

His subsequent conduct evinced the sincerity

of his promises. He was constant in his attendance in parliament whenever the question was brought forward; and he never failed to exert his powerful eloquence in its favour. The countenance, indeed, which he gave it, was of the greatest importance to its welfare; for most of his parliamentary friends, who followed his general political sentiments, patronized it also. By the aid of these, joined to that of the private friends of Mr. Pitt, and of other members, who espoused it without reference to party, it was always so upheld, that after the year 1791 no one of the defeats, which it sustained, was disgraceful. The majority on the side of those interested in the continuance of the trade was always so trifling, that the abolitionists were preserved a formidable body, and their cause respectable.

I never heard whether Mr. Fox, when he came into power, made any stipulations with his Majesty on the subject of the Slave-trade: but this I know, that he determined upon the abolition of it, if it were practicable, as the highest glory of his administration, and as the greatest earthly blessing which it was in the power of the government to bestow; and that he took considerable pains to convince some of his colleagues in the cabinet of the propriety of the measure.

When the resolution, which produced the debates in parliament, as detailed in the last chapter, was under contemplation, it was thought expedient that Mr. Fox, as the minister of state in the house of commons, should introduce it himself. When applied to for this purpose he cheerfully undertook the office, thus acting in consis-

tency with his public declaration in the year 1791, "that in whatever situation he might ever be, he would use his warmest efforts for the promotion of this righteous cause."

Before the next measure, or the bill to prevent the sailing of any new vessel in the trade after the 1st of August, was publicly disclosed, it was suggested to him, that the session was nearly over; that he might possibly weary both houses by another motion on the subject; and that if he were to lose it, or to experience a diminution of his majorities in either, he might injure the cause, which was then on the road to triumph. To this objection he replied, "that he believed both houses were disposed to get rid of the trade; that his own life was precarious; that if he omitted to serve the injured Africans on this occasion, he might have no other opportunity of doing it; and that he dared not, under these circumstances, neglect so great a duty."

This prediction relative to himself became unfortunately verified; for his constitution, after this began to decline, till at length his mortal destiny, in the eyes of his medical attendants, was sealed.

At length the session of 1807 commenced. It was judged advisable by Lord Grenville, that the expected motion on this subject should, contrary to the practice hitherto adopted, be agitated first in the lords. Accordingly, on the 2d of January he presented a bill, called an act for the abolition of the Slave-trade; but he then proposed only to print it, and to let it lie on the table, that it might be maturely considered, before it should be discussed.

On the 4th no less than four counsel were heard against the bill.

On the 5th the debate commenced. But of this I shall give no detailed account; nor, indeed, of any of those which followed it. The truth is, that the subject has been exhausted. They, who spoke in favour of the abolition, said very little that was new concerning it. They, who spoke against it, brought forward, as usual, nothing but negative assertions and fanciful conjectures. To give therefore what was said by both parties at these times, would be but useless repetition. To give, on the other hand, that which was said on one side only would appear partial. Hence I shall offer to the reader little more than a narrative of facts upon these occasions.

Lord Grenville opened the debate by a very luminous speech. He was supported by the Duke of Gloucester, the Bishop of Durham, (Dr. Barrington,) the Earls Moira, Selkirk, and Roslyn, and the Lords Holland, King, and Hood. The opponents of the bill were the Duke of Clarence, the Earls Westmoreland and St. Vincent, and the Lords Sidmouth, Eldon, and Hawkesbury.

The question being called for at four o'clock in the morning, it appeared that the personal votes and proxies in favour of Lord Grenville's motion amounted to one hundred, and those against it to thirty-six. Thus passed the first bill in England, which decreed, that the African Slave-trade should cease. And here I cannot omit paying to his highness the Duke of Gloucester the tribute of respect, which is due to him, for having opposed the example of his royal relations on this subject in behalf of an helpless

and oppressed people. The sentiments too, which he delivered on this occasion, ought not to be forgotten. "This trade," said he "is contrary to the principles of the British constitution. It is, besides, a cruel and criminal traffic in the blood of my fellow-creatures. It is a foul stain on the national character. It is an offence to the Almighty. On every ground therefore on which a decision can be made; on the ground of policy, of liberty, of humanity, of justice, but, above all, on the ground of religion, I shall vote for its immediate extinction."

On the 10th of February the bill was carried to the house of commons. On the 20th counsel were heard against it; after which, by agreement, the second reading of it took place. On the 23d the question being put for the commitment of it, Lord Viscount Howick, (now Earl Grey,) began an eloquent speech. After he had proceeded in it some way, he begged leave to enter his protest against certain principles of relative justice, which had been laid down. "The merchants and planters," said he, "have an undoubted right, in common with other subjects of the realm, to demand justice at our hands. But that, which they denominate justice, does not correspond with the legitimate character of that virtue; for they call upon us to violate the rights of others, and to transgress our own moral duties. That, which they distinguish as justice, involves in itself the greatest injury to others. It is not in fact justice, which they demand, but....favour.... and favour to themselves at the expense of the most grievous oppression of their fellow-creatures."

He then argued the question upon the ground

of policy. He showed by a number of official documents, how little this trade had contributed to the wealth of the nation, being but a fifty-fourth part of its export trade; and he contended that as four-sevenths of it had been cut off by his Majesty's proclamation, and the passing of the foreign Slave-bill in a former year, no detriment of any consequence would arise from the present measure.

He entered into an account of the loss of seamen, and of the causes of the mortality, in this trade.

He went largely into the subject of the negro population in the islands from official documents, giving an account of it up to the latest date. He pointed out the former causes of its diminution, and stated how the remedies for these would follow.

He showed how, even if the quantity of colonial produce should be diminished for a time, this disadvantage would, in a variety of instances, be more than counterbalanced by advantages, which would not only be great in themselves, but permanent.

He then entered into a refutation of the various objections which had been made to the abolition, in an eloquent and perspicuous manner; and concluded by appealing to the great authorities of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox in behalf of the proposed measure. "These precious ornaments," he said, "of their age and country had examined the subject with all the force of their capacious minds. On this question they had dismissed all animosity; all difference of opinion; and had proceeded in union; and he believed, that the best tribute of respect we could

show, or the most splendid monument we could raise, to their memories would be by the adoption of the glorious measure of the abolition of the Slave-trade."

Lord Howick was supported by Mr. Roscoe, who was then one of the members for Liverpool; by Mr. Lushington, Mr. Fawkes, Lord Mahon, Lord Milton, Sir John Doyle, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Wilberforce, and Earl Percy, the latter of whom wished that a clause might be put into the bill, by which all the children of slaves, born after January 1810, should be made free. General Gascoyne and Mr. Hibbert opposed the bill. Mr. Manning hoped that compensation would be made to the planters in case of loss. Mr. Bathurst and Mr. Hiley Addington preferred a plan for gradual abolition to the present mode. These having spoken, it appeared on a division, that there were for the question two hundred and eighty-three, and against it only sixteen.

Of this majority I cannot but remark, that it was probably the largest that was ever announced on any occasion, where the house was called upon to divide. I must observe also, that there was such an enthusiasm among the members at this time, that there appeared to be the same kind and degree of feeling, as manifested itself within the same walls in the year 1788, when the question was first started.

On the 27th of February Lord Howick moved, that the house resolve itself into a committee on the bill for the abolition of the Slave-trade. At length the committee was allowed to sit *pro forma*, and Mr. Hobhouse was put into the chair. The bill then went through it, and, the house being resumed, the report was received and read.

On the 6th of March, when the committee sat again, Sir C. Pole moved, that the year 1812 be substituted for the year 1807, as the time when the trade should be abolished. This amendment produced a long debate. At length, on a division, there appeared to be one hundred and twenty-five against the amendment, and for it only seventeen. The chairman then read the bill, and it was agreed that he should report it with the amendments on Monday. The bill enacted, that no vessel should clear out for slaves from any port within the British dominions after the first of May 1807, and that no slave should be landed in the colonies after the first of March 1808.

On the 16th of March, on the motion of Lord Henry Petty, the question was put, that the bill be read a third time. Mr. Hibbert, Captain Herbert, T. W. Plomer, Mr. Windham, and Lord Castlereagh spoke against the motion. Sir P. Francis, Mr. Lyttleton, Mr. H. Thornton, and Messrs. Barham, Sheridan, and Wilberforce supported it. After this the bill was passed without a division.

On Wednesday, the 18th, Lord Howick, accompanied by Mr. Wilberforce and others, carried the bill to the lords. Lord Grenville, on receiving it, moved that it should be printed, and that, if this process could be finished by Monday, it should be taken into consideration on that day. The reason of this extraordinary haste was, that his Majesty, displeased with the introduction of the Roman Catholic officers' bill into the commons, had signified his intention to the members of the existing administration, that they were to be displaced.



The uneasiness, which a few days before, had sprung up among the friends of the abolition, on the report that this event was probable, began now to show itself throughout the kingdom. Letters were written from various parts, manifesting the greatest fear and anxiety on account of the state of the bill, and desiring answers of consolation. Nor was this state of the mind otherwise than what might have been expected upon such an occasion; for the bill was yet to be printed. Being an amended one, it was to be argued again in the lords. It was then to receive the royal assent. All these operations implied time; and it was reported that the new ministry was formed; among whom were several, who had shown a hostile disposition to the cause.

On Monday, the 23d, the house of lords met. Such extraordinary diligence had been used in printing the bill, that it was then ready. Lord Grenville immediately brought it forward. The Earl of Westmoreland and the Marquis of Sligo opposed it. The Duke of Norfolk and the bishop of Landaff (Dr. Watson) supported it. The latter said, that this great act of justice would be recorded in heaven. The amendments were severally adopted without a division. But here an omission of three words was discovered, namely, "country, territory, or place," which, if not rectified, might defeat the purposes of the bill. An amendment was immediately proposed and carried. Thus the bill received the last sanction of the peers. Lord Grenville then congratulated the house on the completion, on its part, of the most glorious measure, that had

ever been adopted by any legislative body in the world.

The amendment, now mentioned, occasioned the bill to be sent back to the commons. On the 24th, on the motion of Lord Howick, it was immediately taken into consideration there, and agreed to ; and it was carried back to the lords, as approved of, on the same day.

But though the bill had now passed both houses, there was an awful fear throughout the kingdom, lest it should not receive the royal assent before the ministry was dissolved. This event took place the next day ; for on Wednesday the 25th, at half past eleven in the morning, his Majesty's message was delivered to the different members of it, that they were then to wait upon him to deliver up the seals of their offices. It then appeared that a commission for the royal assent to this bill among others had been obtained. This commission was instantly opened by the lord chancellor (Erskine) who was accompanied by the lords Holland and Auckland ; and as the clock struck twelve, just when the sun was in its meridian splendour to witness this august act, this establishment of a Magna Charta for Africa in Britain, and to sanction it by its most vived and glorious beams, it was completed. The ceremony being over, the seals of the respective offices were delivered up ; so that the execution of this commission was the last act of the administration of lord Grenville ; an administration, which, on account of its virtuous exertions in behalf of the oppressed African race, will pass to posterity, living through successive generations, in the love and gratitude of the most virtuous of mankind.

## APPENDIX.

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### *Brief view of the Slave-trade since its Abolition by the British Parliament.*

HAVING arrived at the conclusion of Mr. Clarkson's history which terminates with the account of the passage through both houses of parliament, of Mr. Grenvill's bill, "called an act for the Abolition of the Slave-trade," the Editor of these volumes will attempt to give a brief sketch of what has since been done by the Governments of Europe and America for the destruction of this cruel traffic, and the success which has attended their measures.

Many people too hastily concluded, that when the Parliament of Great-Britain had passed an act abolishing the Slave-trade, all that was requisite for the removal of that enormity had been effected. This, however, was far from being the view of the leaders in this great cause. They knew the men they had to contend with; and that although the legislature had pronounced the condemnation of the Slave-trade, that sentence would be wholly unavailing without a continuance of the same exertions and vigilance which had advanced them thus far. It would not be the mere denunciation of pains and penalties, but their infliction, which could restrain men inured to rapine, and habituated to sacrifice all principle and all feeling to gain. The aboli-

tionists, therefore, have remained at their posts, only varying the object of their attention. Their efforts were formerly directed to the legislative prohibition of the trade; they were now employed in rendering that prohibition as effectual as possible. With this view, Mr. Brougham, a distinguished philanthropist and member of the House of Commons, brought forward, June 1810, a motion in that branch of the Legislature for an address to his Majesty on the subject of the Slave-trade; acknowledging with gratitude the endeavours his Majesty had used, in compliance with the wishes of Parliament, to induce foreign nations to concur in relinquishing this disgraceful traffic; but expressing regret that those measures had been so ineffectual; and praying his Majesty to persevere in his endeavours to produce a general abolition of the Slave-trade, and to direct the adoption of such measures as should give effect to the laws for abolishing it. The address further stated, that the house had learned with indignation that certain persons in this country had not scrupled to continue the detestable traffic in slaves; and prayed his Majesty to give to all officers of the navy, and others, such orders as might effectually check practices equally contemptuous to the authority of Parliament, and derogatory to the interests and the honour of the country.

In addition to this address, a resolution was proposed and adopted, which, after stating that the house had learned, with surprise and indignation, the attempts that had recently been made to evade the prohibitions of the acts abolishing the African Slave-trade, went to pledge the house, that, early in the next session of Parlia-

ment, it would take into its consideration such measures as should tend effectually to prevent such daring violations of the law.

The speech with which Mr. Brougham prefaced these motions was one of singular ability and effect; but it will not be in our power to give more than a hasty sketch of it. The friends of the abolition, he observed, had never expected that any legislative measure would at once destroy the Slave-trade. They were aware how obstinately such a trade would cling to the soil where it had taken root; they anticipated the difficulty of extirpating a traffic which had entwined itself with so many interests, prejudices and passions: but they had, nevertheless, considerably underrated the difficulty; they had underrated the wickedness of the Slave-trader and the infatuation of the planter. While nothing had been done to circumscribe the foreign Slave-trade, it was now found that this commerce had not completely ceased even in this country. In America the trade was prohibited, as in this country; but it was still carried on extensively by Americans: in Spain and Portugal it was still sanctioned by law, and even encouraged. The extent of the Spanish Slave-trade he could not exactly specify; but as into the island of Cuba alone there had of late been annually imported about 8000 slaves, it might be inferred that the whole extent was considerable. The extent of the Portuguese Slave-trade was more exactly known. It amounted to an export from the coast of Africa of about 30,000 slaves annually. The Americans also were great Slave-traders at present. In defiance of their own laws, which their government, though anxious to carry

them into execution, had not the means, from the want of a navy, of enforcing, they largely supplied with slaves not only the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, but our own.

Mr. Brougham then adverted to the evasions of the abolition acts in his own country. For this purpose every expedient had been adopted which the perverse ingenuity of unprincipled avarice could suggest. Vessels were fitted out from Liverpool and London, as if for some innocent commerce, but in reality intended for the Slave-trade. He held in his hand the record of a court of justice which threw much light on this subject. It appeared from thence, that persons, daring to call themselves English merchants, had, but a few months ago, in the very river which washed the walls of the House of Commons, been detected in the act of fitting out a vessel of great bulk, for the purpose of tearing upwards of seven hundred wretched beings from Africa, and carrying them, through the unspeakable horrors of the Middle Passage, to endless bondage and misery; to toil which knows no limits, nor is broken by any rest. Mr. Brougham here read several extracts from the record of condemnation of the vessel in question in the Court of Exchequer the preceding Hilary term. It appeared, that, besides an enormous stock of provisions, water-casks, muskets, &c. there were found on board fifty-five dozen of padlocks, ninety-three pair of handcuffs, one hundred and ninety-seven iron shackles for the feet, fourteen hundred weight of iron chains, one box of *religious* implements: and, that the bodily as well as the spiritual health of this human cargo might not be neglected, the slave merchants, out of

their rare humanity, allowed, for the medical wants of seven hundred negroes of all ages, crammed into a loathsome cage, and carried through new and perilous climates, during a voyage of weeks, or even months, one little medicine chest, value five pounds!—Nor was this the only instance of the kind. At one port of this country, six vessels had been just fitted out for the same series of detestable crimes. It was fit to let our indignation fall on those who still dared thus to trade in human flesh, thus to engage in crimes of the deepest dye. He must protest loudly against the abuse of language, which gave to such men the name of merchants. It was not commerce, it was crime, they were driving. He deemed too highly of commerce, to endure that its name, by a strange perversion, should be prostituted to the use of men who lived by treachery, rapine, torture, and murder, and who habitually practised the worst of crimes for the basest of purposes. For ordinary murder there might be some excuse; but here we had to do with cool, deliberate, mercenary murder. The ruffians who went on the highway, or the pirates who infested the seas, at least exposed their persons; but these wretches durst not do this: they set on men to rob and kill, in whose spoils they were willing to share, though not in their dangers. They were, in short, cowardly suborners of piracy and mercenary murder. To suppress these practices, Mr. Brougham recommended arrangements with Spain, Portugal, and America, and an increase of the naval force on the African coast, chiefly by the accession of small light-armed ships, which could follow the slave-ships up creeks and rivers. He strongly

urged an immediate attention to this point, and an extensive and powerful effort to root out the trade. If once extinguished, it would not again spring up. The industry and capital required by it would find other vents. The labour and ingenuity of the persons employed in it would seek such channels as were open to them. Some of them would naturally go on the highway, while others would betake themselves to piracy; and thus the law might in due time dispose of them. All the measures he had mentioned, however, were mere expedients. The only real and effectual remedy which could be applied, was at once to declare that trading in slaves was *felony*. When in this country so many trivial offences were visited with such severity, could any one, who knew what slave-trading was, hesitate in at length agreeing to punish it as a crime. The idea of stopping it by pecuniary penalties, while its gains were so enormous as they were at present, was utterly vain. While you levied your pence, the wholesale dealers in blood and torture pocketed their pounds, and laughed at your two-penny penalty. A waterman who overloads his boat in the river Thames, if one of the passengers should by accident be drowned, is liable by the 10th of Geo. II. to be transported for seven years as a felon. How did we treat those who overloaded their vessels with negroes, so as knowingly and wilfully to ensure the death of many and the torments of all? We imposed upon them a pecuniary mulct. What had the divine legislator said on this subject? "Whosoever stealeth a man and selleth him, or in whose hands he shall be found, shall surely be put to death." And what was our gloss on this text?



“Whoever stealeth a man, and tortureth him, and killeth him, or selleth him into slavery all the days of his life, shall surely pay twenty pounds.” He trusted this grievous incongruity would be done away, and he pledged himself to bring in a bill to that effect early in the ensuing session.

In accordance with his closing declaration, Mr. Brougham brought into the house of commons a bill for rendering more effectual the acts abolishing the Slave-trade. The object of the bill was to punish as felons with transportation for fourteen years, or with imprisonment and hard labour for five, all who are concerned in the Slave-trade as principals, that is, as owner, *part owner*, captain, mate, surgeon, &c. And to punish, as guilty of misdemeanour all who shall assist in any inferiour capacity.

This bill passed through all its stages without the smallest opposition. And on the 14th of May, 1811, received the royal assent, and became the law of the land.

The next object with the friends of bleeding Africa was to procure the abolition and abandonment of the trade by the other powers of Europe and America.

The United States at a very early period co-operated with the philanthropists of England for the suppression of the execrable traffic. In the convention which in 1787 formed the Constitution of the United States, the African Slave-trade became a subject of serious discussion. The result of the discussion was to tolerate till the year 1808 the introduction of Slaves into the country. In the year 1794 a law was passed by Congress prohibiting any citizen of the

United States engaging in the foreign Slave-trade on penalty of the forfeiture of every vessel so employed, and the payment of a fine of \$2,000.

A law was enacted March 2, 1807, by Congress prohibiting on severe penalties the introduction of any Slaves into the United States, after the 1st of January, 1808.

In 1810 Great-Britain negotiated a treaty with Portugal in which the latter engaged to leave unmolested all parts of the coast of Africa not actually belonging to her dominions, in which that trade had been discontinued and abandoned by the powers of Europe who formerly traded there. Reserving however the right of purchasing and trading in slaves within the African dominions of the crown of Portugal.

The Slave-trade came under the consideration of the celebrated Congress of the principal powers of Europe assembled at Vienna in 1815.

After pronouncing this trade to be "the desolation of Africa, the degradation of Europe, and the afflicting scourge of humanity, and affirming, that the final triumph of the cause of the abolition would be one of the greatest monuments of the age which undertook it and which should have gloriously carried it into complete effect," they unitedly declared their determination to accomplish as early as practicable the entire destruction "of a commerce so odious and so strongly condemned by the laws of religion and nature."

According to the mutual stipulations of this Congress, France adhered to the trade for five years. Portugal agreed to abolish the trade north of the equator, and held out a qualified expectation that at a future day it should cease forever

and every where. Spain consented to limit her Slave-trade to an extent of 10 degrees of latitude, and engaged to abolish it entirely at the end of eight years.

At a subsequent period Great-Britain concluded treaties with France and the Netherlands, stipulating for the total and immediate abolition of the Slave-trade by those powers. Portugal continued to refuse to fix any precise period for the final abandonment of the trade—but Spain consented totally to abolish it from the 30th of May, 1820; shortening the period she fixed at the Congress at Vienna about three years.

Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands agreed with Great-Britain, to admit the right of mutually searching any vessels bearing their respective flags, which might be suspected of carrying slaves contrary to the established laws and treaties. But neither the French nor the American government could be prevailed upon to assent to this important arrangement.

But the American government was not backward in taking measures for the suppression of the Slave-trade.

Congress passed a law, May 15, 1820, by which any citizen of the United States, engaging in any way in this detestable traffic, is adjudged a pirate, and on conviction thereof before the Circuit Court of the United States, he shall suffer death.

Great-Britain subsequently passed a similar law. It went into operation Jan. 1st, 1825.

In 1821, a law passed the assembly of the Cortes, by which all Spanish vessels engaged in the Slave-trade are liable to seizure and condemnation. Their owners, fitters out, officers and

crew, are subjected on conviction to the punishment of the galleys, or to hard labour in some other way for ten years. All foreign vessels, and persons employed in introducing slaves into the Spanish dominions are liable to the same condemnation and punishment, and the slaves so introduced are to be free.

The Swedish government has passed an ordinance, putting her subjects engaged in the Slave-trade out of the protection of law.

Some of the rising Republics of South-America have taken a noble stand on the subject of slavery and the Slave-trade. One of the first acts of the constituent assembly of Guatemala was the abolition of Slavery. And by the 13th article of their constitution, every man in the Republic is free, and no one who takes refuge under its laws can be a slave, nor shall any one be accounted a citizen who carries on the Slave-trade.

By a decree of Mexico, every ship, whether national or foreign, arriving in their ports with slaves is confiscated; a punishment of ten years' imprisonment is inflicted, and all the slaves on board are *ipso facto*, declared free.

The provinces of Rio de la Plata, also engage to prohibit in the most effectual manner, all persons subject to their jurisdiction from taking any part in the traffic.

By a treaty which Great-Britain formed with Brazil, the Brazilian Slave-trade will legally cease after the 13th March, 1830.

By a law passed in France, all concerned in any manner whatever in the Slave-trade are subject to banishment, and the confiscation of ship and cargo. All officers so concerned are rendered

incapable of serving in the royal or mercantile navy.

A decree has appeared from the Emperor of Austria, utterly abolishing slavery throughout the Austrian dominions. Every man, says his Imperial Majesty, by the right of nature, sanctioned by reason, must be considered a free person. Every slave becomes free from the moment he touches the Austrian soil, or even an Austrian ship.

Thus we see the Slave-trade has been put out of the protection of law by all the principal governments of Europe and America; but alas, all the decrees which have been issued, the treaties that have been formed, the laws that have been enacted for its suppression, have as yet been of but little practical avail. Whilst the Christian and Philanthropist have been labouring to rescue Africa from her ferocious ravagers, the dealer in human flesh has all along been driving with unabated eagerness and depravity, that detestable traffic which for nearly three centuries has covered a whole continent with misery and mourning.

There are facts in abundance, well attested, and heart-rending, which show that for many years past and even at the present time, the Slave-trade is carried on to as great an extent and with as deadly cruelty, as it was when all the governments permitted it by law. A few of these facts will now be detailed.

Mr. Wilberforce stated in the British Parliament in 1817, that for some years back 25,000 slaves had been annually imported into Cuba, a greater number than had ever before been imported there. One vessel was detected which

measured only 120 tons, but which carried 600 slaves. A gentleman engaged in this traffic, told him that in a vessel of 250 tons, 400 slaves might be somewhat comfortable in the night, *though they could not lie on their backs*. Mr. Wilberforce added that he knew an instance, where, out of 540 slaves, 340 died on the voyage.

It was proved, that from March to July, of the year 1820, there had usually been in the single River Bonny from nine to sixteen slaving vessels of all descriptions at the same time, each capable of carrying from 300 to 700 slaves; and that two of these vessels, which were there in March, and had then sailed to the West-Indies, had returned in July, and were engaged in their second voyage. During the above period of five or six months, 120 sail of French, Spanish, and Portuguese vessels had visited the river Bonny for the purpose of procuring slaves; in consequence of which, the preparation of palm oil is said to have been totally neglected by the natives.

A gentleman on board the *Cyane*, an American sloop of war, states, that the number of vessels engaged in this inhuman traffic is incredible; and that probably not fewer than 200 sail were on the coast at the date of his letter, all of them fast sailers, well manned and armed, and many of them owned by Americans, though under foreign flags.

Admiral Sir George Collier in his Report to the Lords of the Admiralty, dated Sept. 6, 1820, stated, that in the last twelve months not less than 60,000 Africans have been forced from their country, principally under the colours of France; most of whom have been distributed between the islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe, and

Cuba. The confidence under which vessels navigate, bearing the French flag, has become so great, that I saw at the Havana, in July last, no fewer than forty vessels fitting avowedly for the Slave-trade, protected equally by the flags and papers of France and Spain. France has certainly issued her decrees against this traffic; but she has done nothing to enforce them. On the contrary, she gives to the trade all countenance short of public avowal.

“On this distressing subject, so revolting to every well regulated mind, I will add, that such is the merciless treatment of the slaves, by the persons engaged in the traffic, that no fancy can picture the horror of the voyage. Crowded together so as not to give the power to move; linked one to the other by the leg; never unfettered while life remains, or till the iron shall have fretted the flesh almost to the bone; forced under a deck, as I have seen them, *not thirty inches in height*; breathing an atmosphere the most putrid and pestilential possible; with little food, and less water; subject also to the most severe punishment, at the caprice or fancy of the brute who may command the vessel: it is to me a matter of extreme wonder that any of these miserable people live the voyage through; many of them, indeed, perish on the passage, and those who remain to meet the shore, present a picture of wretchedness language cannot express.”

The following singular and distressing circumstance which occurred about the same time, shows that these monsters in iniquity, do not always escape the retributive justice of God. The ship *Le Rodeur*, Capt. B——, of 200 tons

burthen, left Havre the 24th of January, 1819, for the coast of Africa, and reached her destination on the 14th of March following, anchoring at Bonny in the river Calabar. The crew, consisting of twenty-two men, enjoyed good health during the outward voyage, and during their stay at Bonny, where they continued till the 6th of April. They had observed no trace of ophthalmia among the natives; and it was not until fifteen days after they had set sail on the return voyage, and the vessel was near the Equator, that they perceived the first symptoms of this frightful malady. It was then remarked, that the negroes, who, to the number of one hundred and sixty, were crowded together in the hold and between the decks, had contracted a considerable redness of the eyes, which spread with singular rapidity. No great attention was at first paid to these symptoms, which were thought to be caused only by *the want of air* in the hold, and by the *scarcity of water* which had already begun to be felt. At this time they were limited to eight ounces of water a day for each person, which quantity was afterwards reduced to *the half of a wine glass*. By the advice of M. Maignan, the surgeon of the ship, the negroes, who had hitherto remained shut up in the hold, were brought upon deck in succession, in order that they might breathe a purer air. But it became necessary to abandon this expedient, salutary as it was, because many of those negroes, affected with Nostalgia, (that is, a passionate desire to revisit their native land,) threw themselves into the sea, locked in each other's arms,

“The disease which had spread itself so rap-



idly and frightfully among the Africans, soon began to infect all on board, and to create alarms for the crew. The danger of infection, and perhaps the cause which produced the disease were increased by a violent dysentery, attributed to the use of rain water. The first of the crew who caught the infection was a sailor who slept under the deck, near the grated hatch which communicated with the hold. The next day a landsman was seized with ophthalmia; and, in three days more, the captain and almost the whole crew were infected by it."

"The sufferings of the people, and the number of the blind augmented every day; so that the crew—previously alarmed by the apprehension of a revolt among the negroes—were seized with the further dread of not being able to make the West-Indies, if the only sailor who had hitherto escaped the contagion, and on whom their whole hope rested, should become blind like the rest. This calamity had actually befallen the *Leon*, a Spanish slaver which the *Rodeur* met with on her passage, and the whole of whose crew, having become blind, were under the necessity of altogether abandoning the direction of their ship. They entreated the charitable interference of the *Rodeur*; but the seamen of this vessel could not either quit her to go on board the *Leon*, on account of the cargo of negroes, nor receive the crew in the *Rodeur*, in which there was scarcely room for themselves. The difficulty of taking care of so large a number of sick in so confined a space, and the total want of fresh meat, and of medicines, made them envy the fate of those who were about to become

the victims of a death which seemed to them inevitable, and the consternation was general.”\*

“The Rodeur reached Gaudaloupe on the 21st of June, 1819, her crew being in a most deplorable condition. Three days after her arrival, the only man who, during the voyage, had withstood the influence of the contagion, and whom Providence appeared to have preserved as a guide to his unfortunate companions, was seized with the same malady. Of the negroes, thirty-nine had become perfectly blind, twelve had lost an eye, and fourteen were affected with blemishes more or less considerable. Of the crew, twelve lost their sight entirely, among whom was the surgeon; five became blind of one eye, one of them being the captain; and four were partially injured.”

Such were the miseries of this voyage of iniquity, but the atrocities of it even transcended its miseries. It is stated among other things, that the captain caused several of the negroes, who were prevented in the attempt to throw themselves overboard, to be shot and hanged, in the hope that the example might deter the rest from a similar conduct. But even this severity proved unavailing, and it became necessary to confine the slaves entirely to the hold during the remainder of the voyage. It is further stated, that upwards of thirty of the slaves who became blind *were thrown into the sea, and drowned*, upon the principle that, had they been landed at Guadaloupe, no one would have bought them, and that the proprietors would consequently have incurred the expense of maintaining them with-

\* The Leon has not been since heard of, and in all probability was lost.

out the chance of any return ; while by throwing them overboard, not only was this certain loss avoided, but ground was also laid for a claim on the underwriters by whom the cargo had been insured ; and who are said to have allowed the claim, and made good the value of the slaves thus destroyed.

In 1821, a committee of the United States Congress reported, that during the last 25 or 30 years, one million five hundred thousand slaves had been taken from Africa, averaging from fifty to eighty thousand a year. This computation is probably quite too low.

In the memorial of the Colonization Society, presented to Congress in 1822, it was stated that official documents had been presented to government from which it appeared that in 1821, two hundred thousand had been carried away from the coast of Africa.

The African Institution reported that in 1822, 28,246 slaves were imported into Rio de Janeiro alone from the coast. The number embarked had been 31,240—3,484 having died on the passage.

In 1824, the same society reported that 120,000 were taken from Africa during that year.

In 1825, "there were," says Commodore Bollen, "in the river Bonny alone 2007 tons of shipping, 293 persons, and 35 guns, under the flag of the French nation, employed in the speculation of human flesh."

Within the last eleven years it is stated on accurate authority, there have been carried into the single port of Rio Janeiro, in Brazil, 322,526 slaves making 29,320 each year, of whom from 2 to 3,000 died on the passage. In 1829,

125 vessels sailed from Cuba to Africa. Not long since 3,000 human beings were landed upon this island from one vessel. Dr. Philip a distinguished missionary at South Africa, estimates 100,000 as the number of slaves now annually deported.

From the foregoing facts and estimates and others which might be made, it appears that there has yet been little or no diminution in the numbers of the wretched beings who are annually torn from their home, friends and country, and consigned to interminable bondage.

A few facts in addition to what have been produced, will be now stated, showing that the atrocities of the Slave-trade continue to be as outrageous and revolting as ever.

In 1822, four slave vessels were taken in the river Bonny by a squadron under Sir Robert Mends, stationed by the British government on the coast of Africa to prevent the infraction of the laws for the abolition of the Slave-trade. The vessels were Spanish and French. They had nearly 1300 slaves on board. A Spanish schooner when taken possession of, had a lighted match hanging over the open magazine hatch. The match was placed there by the crew, before they leaped overboard and swam for the shore; it was seen by one of the British seamen, who boldly put his hat under the burning wick and removed it. The magazine contained a large quantity of powder. One spark from the flaming match would have blown up 325 unfortunate victims lying in irons in the hold. These monsters in iniquity expressed their deep regret after the action that their diabolical plan had failed.

On board another of the vessels, Lieutenant

Mildmay, the officer who captured her, observed a slave girl, about twelve or thirteen years of age, in irons; to which was fastened a thick iron chain, ten feet in length, that was dragged along as she moved. He ordered the girl to be instantly released from this fetter; and, that the captain who had treated her so cruelly might not be ignorant of the pain inflicted upon an unprotected and innocent child, the irons were ordered to be put upon him.

The Slaves, in one of the vessels at the time of the capture were found in the most wretched condition; some lying on their backs, others sitting on the bottom of the ships. They were chained to each other by the arms and legs: iron collars were placed round their necks. In addition to these provisions for confinement, they were fastened together by a long chain, which connected several of the collars for their greater security in that dismal prison. Thumb-screws, to be used as instruments of torture, were also found in the vessel. From their confinement and sufferings the slaves often injured themselves by beating, and vented their grief upon such as were next them by biting and tearing their flesh. Some of them were bound with cords, and many had their arms grievously lacerated.

In 1825, on board a schooner's boat of only 5 tons burthen which was taken, were found seventeen slaves, twenty-three had been taken in, six had already died. The negroes were in a state of complete starvation and approaching dissolution. The space allowed them was no more than eighteen inches between the water casks and the deck.

The Aviso, another captured vessel, had 465

slaves on board; of whom 34 died after their capture, notwithstanding every attention. Such was the filth and crowd that not half could have reached the Brazils alive. Commodore Bullen put the crew on shore in Prince's Island. These wretches, as soon as they found that they must be boarded, had stove in their boilers, as a last malignant effort to add to the misery of those whom a few minutes would place beyond their power.

One Oiseau, commander of a French Slave-ship called *Le Louis*, having completed his cargo on the old Calabar, thrust them all between decks, (a height of only three feet,) and closed the hatches on them for the night. Fifty were found dead in the morning. As a matter of course, he only immediately returned on shore to supply their place. Captain Arnaud, of the *Louisa*, arrived at Guadaloupe with 200 negroes, the remainder of an original cargo of 265. Having by mistake purchased more than he could accommodate, he had thrown the odd 65 into the sea.

On board a captured vessel was found a letter from a French slave-agent addressed to a firm in Guadaloupe, which furnishes a specimen of their inhuman correspondence. It is a sort of circular, soliciting for custom, and evidently drawn up in the current language of the trade; language calculated to make all, except these consignees of human beings, shudder at the depth of moral debasement to which it seems our nature may be reduced. The following is an extract from it:—"Under the auspices of Mr. Couronneau of Bordeaux, our friend, we have the honour of tendering to you our services at

this place. You know, gentlemen, that the advantage which our market offers for the disposal of *ebony* gives it a great preference over any other of our colonies; and it strikes us that it would suit you to send to it a few shipments of that sort. We have received this year a great many cargoes of that article on account of merchants of Nantz, and towards the end of January, we expect here other ships that have sailed from the last mentioned port. All our sales have been attended with favourable results. The last cargo sold here was that of the *Harriett* of Nantz: 328 *logs* were disposed of on their landing (those that were damaged excepted) at 225 dollars each. This merchandize was of a very ordinary nature, and had suffered much: by getting rid of the article at once you may make a much better thing of it."

A writer in the *African Repository*, who visited Africa in one of our national vessels, states, that the steward of the vessel had been to Africa five times in a slave-ship. On one occasion when an insurrection was expected, they shot two hundred of the slaves. Out of 400, the number which they carried at each trip, 40 died on every passage. The *African Institution* in one of their reports publishes the following deed of infernal atrocity. A French slaver having landed part of a cargo of 250 slaves, at *Guadeloupe*, was pursued by an armed French vessel when, to avoid detection, they threw the remaining sixty-five overboard, all of whom perished.

A writer in a letter from *Rio de Janeiro*, dated January 11, 1830, says, I will relate but a single fact at this time to show the dreadful character of the Slave-trade. The Brazilian govern-

ment derives a large revenue from the importation of slaves, by laying a duty so much per head immediately on their arrival, without regard to their health or condition. When vessels therefore, which have slaves on board arrive off the port, a general survey takes place by the physician, and those poor wretches whose existence is doubtful are *thrown overboard in order to save the duty*.

A recent petition at Paris, states, that about three thousand negroes, men, women, and children are thrown into the sea every year, of whom more than half are thus sacrificed whilst yet alive, either to escape from the visit of cruisers or because worn down by their sufferings they could not be sold to advantage.

But I will proceed no further with the heart-rending detail, though facts equally cruel and atrocious might be recited indefinitely.

One reason why the Slave-trade continues to be carried on to such an extent, notwithstanding its condemnation by all civilized governments is, that some of the powers, (especially France,) have fixed to their laws very inadequate penalties. Simple confiscation, or any pecuniary fine will do nothing toward diminishing this commerce of blood, because, the profits are so enormous and the risk so small, as on the whole to make it a rapid source of wealth.

Here the feeling heart is compelled to ask, must this inhuman traffic still continue to be carried on as it has been? Has not Africa suffered and bled long enough? Must hundreds of thousands more of her unoffending population be torn from all that is dear to them on earth, and through the horrors of the middle passage be



conducted and consigned to the chains and miseries of an interminable servitude? Have the efforts and sacrifices which philanthropists and christians have for half a century been making to relieve and redress the injuries of the oppressed, been of no avail? Was that great triumph of humanity, the abolition of the Slave-trade by the British Parliament, a barren and useless victory? Far otherwise. True the specific and final object of the abolitionists has not yet been gained? but has not something been gained, something of importance, something that promises ultimate security and peace to Africa? There has been, it may be confidently affirmed the deep stain: But a spirit has been waked up and extended, which will not rest till not only the Slave-trade, but slavery itself is wiped from the face of the globe. He who pleads the cause of the oppressed, it is believed, has decreed the destruction of them both.

A feeling of friendliness and sympathy toward Africa began to appear and spread with the first agitation, by the British Parliament, of the brutal abominations and cruelties of the Slave-trade. Since that period this feeling has been steadily increasing in extent and intenseness. It has reached and is pervading all civilized countries. What is peculiarly cheering, it has issued in the formation of a number of philanthropic and effective associations in England and America, which have already done much, and with the blessing of God, will yet do far more for the oppressed, persecuted, trodden down sons of Africa. A sketch of two or three of the most prominent of these, with their objects, may not be uninteresting.

*African Institution.*

ONE of the oldest of these associations is called the African Institution. This was organized in London, April 14, 1807. The great motive which led to its formation, was a benevolent desire to do something in some way to make reparation for the injuries inflicted on Africa. A prominent object with the Society has ever been, to diminish the extent and the horrors of the Slave-trade. To this end it has used its influence with government, to do all that might be practicable by laws and treaties for its suppression. It has watched with an unsleeping vigilance the infractions of the laws and treaties when formed, and has succeeded in rescuing great numbers from the hold of the Slave-ship. It has been especially diligent in ascertaining and publishing facts which illustrate the inhuman atrocity of the trade, as more recently carried on. It has done much to circulate information throughout England, and in other countries, on the subject of the Slave-trade and slavery, and by this means to open the eyes of the nations to the iniquities of this system of cold blooded oppression, and to stir up their hearts to the benevolent enterprize of its destruction.

Soon after its formation, this Society took under its special management the colony of free blacks, which had been previously planted at Sierra Leone, on the West coast of Africa.

This colony was founded by the celebrated Granville Sharp. By the decision of the High Court of England, in the case of Somerset,\* that

\* See volume I, page 38.

the British constitution does not recognize a state of slavery, four hundred negroes were thrown without employment into the streets of London. They immediately resorted to Mr. Sharp for protection. After much deliberation he determined to colonize them some where on the coast of Africa. Proper representations being made to government, they concluded to defray the whole expense of the expedition. The transports which conveyed them sailed in May, 1787; these were the first emigrants. The land originally purchased of the natives, for the colony, is about twenty miles square, lying on Cape Sierra Leone,  $8^{\circ} 12'$  north latitude, and about  $12^{\circ}$  west longitude. Repeated and heavy disasters attended the early history of the colony. Almost one half of the original emigrants died during the first year. Total extinction was sometimes feared. But the projectors of this benevolent enterprise persevered in their efforts to sustain and enlarge the establishment. They succeeded; new emigrants were repeatedly sent out. No expense was spared, Mr. Sharp expended in the progress of the work more than one thousand four hundred pounds sterling from his private funds, and the Sierra Leone Company, which was formed in 1790, and which had the care of the colony until it was committed into the hands of the African Institution, expended more than eighty-two thousand pounds sterling.

Soon after the commencement of the present century, the directors of the Sierra Leone Company were influenced on account of heavy misfortunes, to make a very spirited representation of the state of the colony to Parliament, accompanied with the urgent request that the govern-

ment would take it under its protection. The whole subject was fully investigated by a committee of the House of Commons. And in January, 1807, all the possessions of the Company were surrendered to the British crown. This same year, rendered illustrious by the abolition of the Slave-trade, the colony was made the asylum of liberated slaves. The colony now embraces about 18,000 inhabitants; 12,000 of whom have been rescued from the hold of the Slave-ship. Schools are universally established, and nearly the whole population attend public worship. The gospel has here gloriously triumphed over the degradation of the African, and has indeed made him a new creature. It has wrought his redemption from the bondage of sin and satan, and brought him exulting into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Songs of thanksgiving have ascended to the one living and true God from many a valley and hill where the devil had been openly worshiped for ages.

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### *Anti-Slavery Society.*

In January, 1823, a Society was formed in London for mitigating and gradually abolishing the state of slavery throughout the British dominions. It is sometimes called the Anti-slavery Society. His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester is president of the society. In the list of vice-presidents, are the names of many of the most distinguished philanthropists of the day, and among them, that of the never to be forgotten champion of the negro's cause, Mr. Wilberforce.

The society has already published several works illustrative of the state of slavery, and pointing out its atrocious evils, in a commercial and political, as well as a religious point of view; and which, by apparently unanswerable arguments tend to hold up the system to merited detestation, by every class of society, from the statesman to the peasant. The following summary of the evils to which the slaves in the British colonies are subject, may serve to give some idea of their miserable and degraded condition:—

There are, in the colonies of Great-Britain, upwards of 800,000 human beings in a state of degrading personal slavery.

These unhappy persons are the absolute property of their master, who may sell or transfer them at his pleasure, and who may also regulate, according to his discretion, (within certain limits) the measure of their labour, their food, and their punishment.

Many of the slaves are (and all may be) branded like cattle, by means of a hot iron, on the shoulder or other conspicuous part of the body, with the initials of their master's name; and thus bear about them, in indelible characters, the proof of their debased and servile state.

The slaves, whether male or female are driven to labour by the impulse of the cart whip, for the sole benefit of their owners, from whom they receive no wages; and this labour is continued (with certain intermissions for breakfast and dinner,) from morning to night throughout the year.

In the season of crop, which lasts for four or five months of the year, their labour is protracted,

not only throughout the day, as at other times, but during either half the night, or the whole of every alternate night.

Besides being generally made to work under the lash, without wages, the slaves are further obliged to labour for their own maintenance on that day which ought to be devoted to repose and religious instruction. And as that day is also their only market-day, it is of necessity a day of worldly occupation, and much bodily exertion.

The colonial laws arm the master, or any one to whom he may delegate his authority, with a power to punish his slaves to a certain extent, without the intervention of the magistrate, and without any responsibility for the use of this tremendous discretion; and to that extent he may punish them for any offence, or for no offence. These discretionary punishments are usually inflicted on the naked body with the cart whip, an instrument of dreadful severity, which cruelly lacerates the flesh of the sufferer. Even the unhappy females are equally liable with the men to have their persons thus shamelessly exposed and barbarously tortured at the caprice of their master or overseer.

The slaves being regarded in the eye of the law as mere chattels, they are liable to be seized in execution for their master's debts; and, without any regard to the family ties which may be broken by this oppressive and merciless process, to be sold by auction to the highest bidder, who may remove them to a distant part of the same colony, or even exile them to another colony.

Marriage, that blessing of civilized, and even of savage life, is protected in the case of the slaves by no legal sanction. It cannot be said to

exist among them. Those, therefore, who live together as man and wife, are liable to be separated by the caprice of their master, or by sale for the satisfaction of his creditors.

In none of the colonies of Great-Britain have those legal facilities been afforded to the slave to purchase his own freedom, which have produced such extensive beneficial effects in the colonial possessions of Spain and Portugal. On the contrary, in many of our colonies, even the voluntary manumission of slaves by their masters has been obstructed, and in some rendered nearly impossible, by large fines.

It is an universal principle of colonial law, that all black or coloured persons are presumed and taken to be slaves, unless they can legally prove the contrary. The liberty, therefore, even of free persons, is thus often greatly endangered, and sometimes lost. They are liable to be apprehended as run-away slaves, and to be sold into endless bondage as such, if they fail to do that which though free, nay, though born perhaps in Great-Britain itself, they may be unable to do—namely, to establish the fact of their freedom by such evidence as the colonial laws require.

Many thousand infants are annually born within the British dominions to no inheritance but that of the hapless, hopeless servitude which has been described; and the general oppressiveness of which might be inferred from this striking and most opprobrious fact alone, that while in the United States of America the slaves increase rapidly—so rapidly as to double their number in 20 years—there is, even now, in the British colonies, no increase, but on the contrary a diminution of their numbers.

The more immediate objects of the society are, to *ameliorate* the condition of the slaves, and to facilitate the means by which they may obtain their freedom, and for the accomplishment of these intentions:

To remove all the existing obstructions to the manumission of slaves;—

To cause the slaves to cease to be chattels in the eye of the law;—

To prevent their removal, *as slaves*, from colony to colony, and, under certain modifications, their sale or transfer, except with the land to which they might be attached;—

To abolish markets and compulsory labour on the Sunday; and to make that day a day of rest, as well as of religious worship and instruction; and also to secure to the slaves equivalent time in each week, in lieu of Sunday, and in addition to any time, which, independently of Sunday is now afforded them, for cultivating their provision grounds;—

To protect the slaves, by law, in the possession and transmission of the property they may thus, or in any other way, acquire;—

To enable the slave to purchase his freedom, by the payment at once of a fair price for his redemption, or of a fifth part of that price at a time, in return for an additional day in the week to be employed for his own benefit;—

To make the testimony of slaves available in courts of justice, both in civil and criminal cases;—

To relieve all negroes and persons of colour from the burden of legally proving their freedom, when brought into question, and to throw on the



claimant of their persons the burden of legally proving his right to them ;—

To provide the means of religious instruction for the black and coloured population, and of Christian education for their children ;—

To institute marriage among the slaves ; and to protect that state from violation, and from either forcible or voluntary disruption ;—

To put an end to the driving system ;—

To put an end also to the arbitrary punishment of slaves, and to place their persons as well as property under the guardianship of the law ;—

To provide that all children born after a certain day shall be free,—care being taken of their education and maintenance until they shall be capable of acting for themselves ;—

To provide that no colonial governour, judge, attorney general, or fiscal, shall be a possessor of slaves, or shall have a direct and obvious reversionary interest in such property, or shall be the agent of the proprietors of slaves.

The society has further proposed, that the final extinction of slavery should be accomplished, by the redemption of all females from the lowest age, to about 40 ; by which means, all their posterity would be born free. The cost of this measure is estimated at £300,000 ; but should parliament refuse to accede to this, or some other effective plan, the society trust that their object will nevertheless be obtained, by bringing free labour into competition with slave labour ; so that the latter shall become of so little value as to be not worth retaining. The parent society is supported by many auxiliaries, not fewer than 250 of which are in active operation in various parts of the kingdom ; and if they continue to proceed

with the energy that has hitherto marked their progress, there can be little doubt but that they will finally succeed in a cause, in which, truth, justice, and every noble principle of human nature, as well as the dictates of religion, are arrayed on their side.

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### *American Colonization Society.*

If we turn to America, we discover there, likewise, a spirit in existence which promises some redress to Africa, for her accumulated wrongs. This spirit has been a long time in existence and steadily increasing in extent and influence. It was this spirit which in 1808, prohibited the Slave-trade by law in the National Legislature, and which in 1820, branded it with the name and penalty of piracy. It was this spirit which conceived the philanthropic scheme of colonizing emancipated negroes on the coast of Africa, and which finally led to the organization of a Society for the accomplishment of this plan. This Society was organized at Washington in 1816, with the name of the American Society for Colonizing the free people of colour in the United States. "Its aim is," says Mr. Clay, who from the first has been a devoted friend and an efficient promoter of its interests, "to transport to the Western shores of Africa, from the United States, all such free persons of colour as choose voluntarily to go. From its origin, and throughout the whole period of its existence, it has constantly disclaimed all intention whatever of interfering, in the smallest degree, with the rights of property, or the object of emancipation gradual or immediate. It is

not only without inclination, but it is without power, to make any such interference. It is not even a chartered or incorporated company; and it has no other foundation than that of Bible Societies, or any other christian or charitable unincorporated companies in our country. It knows that the subject of emancipation belongs exclusively to the several States, in which slavery is tolerated, and to individual proprietors of slaves in those States, under and according to their laws. It hopes, indeed, (and I trust that there is nothing improper or offensive in the hope,) that if it shall demonstrate the practicability of the successful removal to Africa, of free persons of colour, with their own consent, the cause of emancipation, either by States or by individuals, may be incidentally advanced. That hope is founded not only on the true interest of both races of our population, but upon the assertion, so repeatedly made, that the great obstacle to emancipation arises out of the difficulty of a proper disposal of manumitted slaves. Its pecuniary means, applicable to the design of the institution, are voluntarily contributed by benevolent States or individuals. The States of Virginia and Maryland, besides numerous benevolent persons, throughout the United States, have aided the society.

“Such was the object of the American Colonization Society, organized at the City of Washington about thirteen years ago. Auxiliary institutions have been formed in various parts of the Union, to aid and cooperate with the parent association, which have limited their exertions chiefly to the transmission, to the Treasurer of the Society, of such funds as they could collect

by the voluntary contributions of benevolent and charitable individuals.

“The American Colonization Society, so constituted, with such objects and such means, shortly after its formation, went into operation. It transacts its business at home, principally through a board of managers, which, for the sake of convenience, is fixed in the Metropolis of the Union, and in Africa, through an agent abiding there, and acting under instructions received from the board. The Society has an annual session in the City of Washington, which is attended by its members, and by representatives from such of the auxiliary institutions as can conveniently depute them, at which sessions the board of managers make a report of the general condition of the affairs of the Society during the previous year.

“A minute narrative of all the transactions of the Society from its commencement to the present time, cannot now be given. Those who choose to examine them particularly, will find them recorded in the several reports of the board of managers, which, from time to time, have been published under its direction and authority.

“It will suffice at present to say, that one of the earliest acts of the Society was to despatch a competent agent to Africa, to explore its coasts and the countries bordering upon them, and to select a suitable spot for the establishment of the contemplated colony. The society was eminently fortunate in the choice of its agent, as it has been generally in those whom it subsequently engaged in its service. A selection was finally made of a proper district of country, a purchase was effected from the native authorities,

to which additions have been made, as the growing wants of the colony, actual or anticipated, required. The country so acquired, upon terms as moderate as those on which the Government of the Union extinguishes the Indian title to soil within the United States, embraces large tracts of fertile land, capable of yielding all the rice and varied products of the Tropics, possessing great commercial advantages, with an extent of sea coast from 150 to 200 miles, and enjoys a salubrious climate, well adapted to the negro constitution, and not so fatal to that of the whites as many thickly peopled parts of the United States.

“ Within that district of country, the society founded its colony, under the denomination of Liberia, established towns, laid off plantations for the colonists, and erected military works for their defence. Annually, and as often as the pecuniary circumstances of the society would admit, vessels from the ports of the United States have been sent to Liberia, laden with emigrants and with utensils, provisions and other objects for their comfort. No difficulty has been experienced in obtaining as many colonists as the means of the society were competent to transport. They have been found, indeed, altogether inadequate to accommodate all who were willing and anxious to go. The rate of expense of transportation and subsistence during the voyage, per head, was greater in the earlier voyages. It was subsequently reduced to about \$20, and is believed to be susceptible of considerable further reduction. The number of colonists, of both sexes, amounts now to about 1500.

The colony, in the first periods of its exis-

tence, had some collisions with the native tribes, which rose to such a height as to break out in open war, about four or five years ago. The war was conducted by the late lamented agent, Mr. Ashmun, with singular good judgement and fortune, and was speedily brought to a successful close. It had the effect to impress upon the natives a high idea of the skill, bravery and power of the colonists; and having since become better acquainted with them, perceived the advantages of the colony, and gradually acquired a taste for its commerce and arts, no further misunderstanding with them is apprehended, and the colony is daily acquiring a salutary influence over them.

“The colony has a government adequate to the protection of the rights of persons and property, and to the preservation of order. The agent of the Society combines the functions of governor, commander in chief, and highest judicial officer. The colonists share in the government, and elect various officers necessary to the administration. They appoint annually boards or committees of public works, of agriculture and of health, which are charged with the superintendence of those important interests. It has established schools for the instruction of youth, and erected houses of public worship, in which divine service is regularly performed. And it has a public library of twelve hundred volumes, and a printing press, which issues periodically a gazette. The colonists follow the mechanical arts, or agriculture, or commerce, as their inclinations or attainments prompt them. The land produces rice, cassada, coffee, potatoes, and all kinds of garden vegetables; and is capable of

yielding sugar cane, indigo, in short, all the productions of the Tropics. It is rich, easily tilled, and yields two crops of many articles in the circle of a year. They carry on an advantageous commerce with the natives by exchanges for ivory, gums, dyestuffs, druggs and other articles of African origin; and with the United States, which is annually increasing, and which amounted last year to \$60,000, in the produce of the colony, and in objects acquired by their traffic with the natives; receiving, in return, such supplies of American and other manufactures as are best adapted to their wants."

### LIBERIA.

BRIGHT gem on Afric's sable breast,  
Pure fountain 'mid her desert sands,—  
Spot where her baleful Simooms rest,  
And cease to whelm the pilgrim bands;

To thee shall helpless thousands fly,  
Mother and babe, and hunted sire,  
When the dire slave-ship meets their eye,  
Enkindling War's malignant fire.

Star of the lost!—thy beams are shed  
Like Israel's refuge cities blest,  
When the sad outcast, panting fled,  
And close the avenger's footstep prest.

Thy sheltering arms,—thy genial skies,  
The enfranchis'd slave shall raptur'd view,  
And in the scale of being rise  
To joys his father never knew;

To learn the statesman's mighty lore,—  
To guard the ark when storms invade,—  
Bid learning's temples deck thy shore,  
And churches crown thy palmy shade.

To thee, a wretched heathen band  
Shall 'scape, from Superstition's rod,—  
Eye of a long-benighted land!  
Look up,—and gather light from God.

It brings some relief to the heart that has bled at the recital of the miseries and wrongs of Africa, to know that a little has been done, and that more is in the process of accomplishment for her redemption from oppression, and her elevation to the privileges and the hopes of the gospel. A very little has been done. Let Him be praised who lends his ear to the cries of the captive. Much, very much, remains yet to be accomplished, before humanity or religion can look abroad upon the earth with any satisfaction. Let no one think that the work will be accomplished without a general and holy coalition of all those, in all lands, who can feel the high demands of justice, and strong and generous sympathy over helpless, prostrate wretchedness, for the work is great and difficult beyond conception. The Slave-trade, we have seen, is still carried on, undiminished in extent, unmitigated in atrocity. This must be destroyed; every heart that is not stone says that it must be.

But there is another evil which must be removed before the Slave-trade will cease, namely, slavery. It is this that keeps in such deathless vigour the traffic in human souls. Never will the commerce cease until the market is destroyed. This is the matured opinion of the most judicious and discerning men. Efforts of philanthropists, then, must be *aimed*, and they are beginning to be aimed at *this root* of the desolating evil.

In the United States it is computed that there are now about 2,000,000 of slaves. And they are increasing at a fearful ratio. At least five hundred thousand are added to the number every year. A dark and portentous blot on our otherwise free and happy country! In England they have only



about one third of this number, and they are without much increase, and far removed from the body of the Empire. But here these two millions are fixed right in the heart of the nation." They surround even the capitol. The ruin and danger which this spreading mass of disease threatens to our political institutions, if it continues to spread, is one strong motive for every patriot to lend his aid to the benevolent cause of emancipation.

What has been done and is doing in other parts of the world should incite every American christian and philanthropist to new efforts in behalf of the oppressed. In England the friends of man have determined not to rest until every particle of British soil shall be sacred to freedom. Slavery has already received its death wound in South Africa, Ceylon, the Asiatic Islands, Greece, Hayti, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, Buenos Ayres and Peru. How humane and noble the following decree of the President of the Mexican United States.

"Desiring to signalize the year 1829, the anniversary of our independence, by an act of national justice and beneficence that may turn to the benefit and support of such a valuable good; that may consolidate more and more public tranquillity; that may cooperate to the aggrandizement of the Republic, and return to an unfortunate portion of its inhabitants those rights which they hold from nature, and that the people protects by wise and equitable laws, in conformity with the 30th art. of the constitutive act,

"Making use of the extraordinary faculties which have been granted to the executive, I thus decree :

“ 1st. Slavery is forever abolished in the Republic.

“ 2d. Consequently all those individuals who until this day looked upon themselves as slaves, are free.

“ 3d. When the financial situation of the republic admit, the proprietors of slaves shall be indemnified, and the indemnification regulated by a law.

“ And in order that the present decree may have its full and entire execution, I order it to be printed, published and circulated to all those whose obligation it is to have it fulfilled.

“ Given in the Federal Palace of Mexico, on the 15th of Sept. 1829.”

The miseries of slavery as it exists in the United States, constitute the grand and urgent reason why every feeling heart should regard such a system of oppression with unutterable and irreconcilable displacency.

A general description of these miseries will not be attempted. One particular only will be mentioned, it is, that man continues to be bought and sold. True, we have prohibited the Slave-trade, and even called it piracy. No wretched son of Africa can be openly landed from abroad upon our shores. But, what is equally inhuman and revolting, they can be, they are taken from one part of the country and carried by land and sea into other parts, and there sold like beasts. The horrors of the middle passage are acted over upon our Southern coast. Slaves are continually shipped from Virginia and Maryland and carried round to New-Orleans. A few months since four vessels, two from Baltimore and two from Norfolk arrived at New-Orleans, at the same time having one thousand slaves on board.

At that time, in the space of three months only, two thousand seven hundred were introduced into that city by way of the Balise. In a letter from Norfolk, last winter, it was stated that the ship Jefferson was then lying at the wharf with two hundred slaves on board, and just ready to sail for New-Orleans; that three such cargoes left in the single month of September, and that it was intended to send ten thousand from that city to New-Orleans during the year.

The Slave-trade is carried on with an atrocious briskness even in the district of Columbia, that spot over which these United States, who as a body proudly boast of their liberty, hold supreme jurisdiction. A letter from Alexandria dated 19th Jan. 1830, states, "That the domestic Slave-trade is carried on there with increased vigour. The celebrated firm of Franklin & Armfield realized (I am told) a nett profit of \$33,000 for the year 1829. This large sum being left after all subsidiary expenditures are made, shows that the Slave-trade is carried on with no small advantage at the seat of the national Government. The brig United States sailed from this port in the fall for New-Orleans, having on board two hundred and upwards. Also about the 27th of December, the ship Shenandoah, Capt. Rose, of Georgetown, D. C. belonging to General Smith of the former place, left this port with about two hundred. Another vessel is daily expected to start with slaves to New-Orleans. There are no less than three prisons in this place, and, in case of great emergency, the common jail (for the building of which the government appropriated \$10,000) can be found a very valuable addition."

Not long since a member from Pennsylvania, stated on the floor of Congress, "that there were places in the District, by some called pens, where the slave-dealers gather together gangs of slaves, and then fasten them by a long chain, running between the pairs, and to this they are hand-cuffed, right and left, and so driven off, ten, twenty, and thirty in a drove. He further stated, that the Federal prisons, and their keepers, were extensively used for the purpose of carrying on the Slave-trade. He said he had recently been through the cells of the prison, and he would mention an instance of its occupation, that was presented to him. There was a woman in a cell, with three children, one an infant, all for sale. He was afterwards informed that she was the wife of a free man, who had by her, nine children. As they grew to an age to be profitable in market, the children were sold; now that the woman had become advanced in life, she and her children were separated from her husband, and sent to your prison for sale—your officer who keeps it, being employed as the agent. Another instance was stated to him yesterday, in a way that seemed entitled to credit—that a free coloured man was taken up under the law, and imprisoned. Ignorant, poor, friendless, he found it difficult to prove his freedom, and lay in jail, in so miserable a situation, that his legs were so frozen, that, when liberated, he had to walk on his knees, being a cripple for life."

It is computed that rising sixty thousand are annually bought and sold, and involuntarily transferred from one port to another of this free and happy country. What a variety and accumulation of woes must in consequence be in-

dicted and experienced. Families are separated, the tenderest ties of nature and affection are sundered, with a ruthless indifference to the feelings of the suffering. Husbands are torn from wives, parents from children, brothers from sisters, to meet no more till the graves shall open. Who is not reminded of the case of Philip Lee, the son of Washington's servant, and the agonized bursts of his grief in anticipation of the time, which, but for the interposition of his friends, would have separated him forever from his wife and seven beloved children.

No wonder these wronged and wretched beings are sometimes goaded to deeds of desperation and madness. A violent, but unsuccessful attempt to recover their liberty, was made last winter by a part of a cargo of slaves, whilst on their way to New-Orleans. The captain came near losing his life. In Alabama a slave recently killed his two children, not because he hated them, but because he loved them. He was urged to this deed by the idea of a separation from them which was to take place in a few days, as he had been sold.

But the miseries inflicted by this domestic piracy are not limited to slaves. Those in the undoubted possession of freedom have not unfrequently been seized and sold. They were not taken from the wilds of Africa, but from the centre of American cities where they supposed they were abiding in security. Yes; In *American cities and towns* the very Slave-trade, (on a comparatively small scale indeed,) is acted over perfectly in all its horrid scenes of stealing, chaining, driving, shipping and selling. It is but lately that forty free persons were found to

have been kidnapped from Philadelphia, of whom but fourteen have recovered their liberty. The remaining twenty-six, if they have not already sunk under their misfortunes, are still subjected to the unutterable miseries of an iniquitous servitude. Instances are known where white boys have been stolen, their faces rubbed with walnut black, and themselves sold as slaves. The son of an elder of the Methodist church was seized in Philadelphia; a sticking patch applied to his mouth, and an attempt made to carry him away, which providentially failed.

Such are some of the evils and miseries which spring from the system of slavery. These evils and miseries, and others innumerable and unutterable, are inseparable from the very existence of slavery. A system, founded in essential injustice, must and will be prolific of wretchedness. Slavery, we believe, is a system founded in essential injustice, and that, consequently it cannot be maintained without unnumbered allied wrongs and miseries. So long as the tree is permitted to stand, it will continue to bear the same bitter, and deadly fruits, it ever has borne.

From this view of the subject is derived a most urgent motive for a diligent application of all reasonable means to terminate, as speedily as practicable, this inveterate, system of injustice and oppression. It is a motive adapted to act with peculiar power upon all hearts of quick and generous sensibility.

Glance, for a moment, at the whole mass of wrongs and injuries inflicted by the evil in question. Take into view the foreign and domestic Slave-trade; the extent and the inhumanity with which they are carried on at the present day.

Connect with this the atrocities of the past. Cast the eye back upon the more than three centuries, during which, this iniquitous traffic has afflicted and desolated Africa. Put the whole together, and the amount appals and rends the heart. What a fearful debt have the nations of Christendom contracted to that ill fated continent; robbed as she has been, of more than 100,000 of her sons annually, for a succession of more than three hundred years. "Which of the sands of her deserts has not been steeped in tears, wrung out by the pang of separation, from kindred and country. What wind has passed over her plains without catching up the sighs of broken or bleeding hearts."

Now ought not something to be done, something immediate and effective, as a requital, though late and inadequate, for the injuries that have been heaped, without measure or mercy, upon Africa; injuries, which, though they already transcend the power of imagination to conceive or of language to utter, are still accumulating with a rapidity as great as ever.

Humanity says, yes. When she thinks of the millions of Africa's sons who are now in hopeless bondage, and the circumstances of ignorance and degradation which adhere to their condition, when she thinks of the thousands, some, now gasping in the slave-ship, some, taking their last agonized look of their beloved country and home, some, with a bursting heart thinking of a parent or a child, a brother or a sister, a husband or a wife, whom they left behind, no more to see, she says with an emphatic utterance and a bleeding bosom, something *must be done*.

Justice says the same. Though but a poor and

limited return *can* now be made for centuries of oppression, yet, let what *can* be done, *be done*. My arm is already lifted for retribution. 'The blow can be stayed, only by immediately commencing a course of active and efficient redress.

Patriotism adds her voice. Slavery she feels to be a deadly political evil. It diminishes the strength, mars the beauty, and obscures the glory of every country, to whose soil it adheres. In a world which came from the hands, and is under the government of a just and benevolent God, no system can be a benefit and a blessing to the community which is so pregnant with oppression and wretchedness to helpless millions of our fellow-creatures. Instead of a blessing it is a deadly, blighting curse. "By an eternal law," says Burke, "Providence has decreed vexation to violence, and poverty to oppression."

Religion pleads with peculiar earnestness in behalf of the wretched African. Her arguments are solemn. She points upward to that resistless Being, who, sooner or later, will administer vengeance to the oppressor. She prays, that her own hands may be speedily washed of those stains of blood, which have been fixed upon them by wretches, who, under the christian name, have perpetrated the most inhuman deeds. With high authority, she calls upon all who regard either God or man, to unite their energies for putting an everlasting period to oppression, and to help her in the accomplishment of her blest mission of love, which is, *to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised with chains*. To animate exertion, she sheds the lustre of hope on the future; she reveals the approach of a period,



when Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God. Happy period ! No slave-ship will then visit her coast. No one of her sons will wear the chains of bondage, or bleed with the agonies of separation, from every thing dear. What christian, what philanthropist, what heart of humanity, will not lend their whole strength and influence, to this work of justice and benevolence.

We are all guilty. We are guilty, in having slept so long over an evil, more perfectly fraught with iniquity and wretchedness, than any other that ever afflicted this world of sin. What can be done ? Prayer can be offered to Him who breaks asunder the bonds of oppression. Facts, that touch and stir the heart, can be diffused. Property can be devoted to the benevolent cause of emancipation. Those societies, which aim at Africa's redemption, can be countenanced and sustained. Only let the friends of bleeding humanity awake, unite, and do their manifest duty, and the work of mercy will be achieved. God will bless them. Every attribute of his character will be with them. Unlimited success will surely follow. Every rod will be broken ; every chain unloosed ; every tear wiped away. Those, who have long been thought to have been born only for injury and oppression, will be brought forth into the light, and be heard to exult in the glorious hopes of the gospel ; and the Sun of righteousness, which bears happiness and freedom on his wings, will shed his effulgence upon dark and long degraded Africa.

“ With thy pure dews and rains,  
Wash out, O God, the stains  
From Afric's shore ;  
And, while her palm trees bud,

Let not her children's blood  
 With her broad Niger's flood  
     Be mingled more !

Quench, righteous God, the thirst  
 That Congo's sons hath cursed—  
     The thirst for gold !

Shall not thy thunders speak,  
 Where Mammon's altars reek,  
 Where maids and matrons shriek,  
     Bound, bleeding, sold ?

Hear'st thou, O God, those chains,  
 Clanking on Freedom's plains,  
     By Christians wrought !  
 Them, who those chains have worn,  
 Christians from home have torn,  
 Christians have hither borne,  
     Christians have bought !

Cast down, great God, the fanes  
 That, to unhallowed gains,  
     Round us have risen—  
 Temples, whose priesthood pore  
 Moses and Jesus o'er,  
 Then bolt the black man's door,  
     The poor man's prison !

Wilt thou not, Lord, at last,  
 From thine own image, cast  
     Away all cords,  
 But that of love, which brings  
 Man, from his wanderings,  
 Back to the King of kings,  
     The Lord of lords !

PIERPONT.